

the rich ; for their services are as acceptable to God, if they come from an upright heart, as the services of the rich ; for he expects *according to what a man hath*, and not *according to what he hath not*, 2 Cor. viii. 12. The poor man's turtle-doves or young pigeons, are here said to be an offering of a sweet smelling savour, as much as that of an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs. Yet after all, to *love God with all our hearts*, and to *love our neighbour as our selves*, is better than all burnt-offerings and sacrifices, Mark xii. 33.

C H A P. II.

In this chapter we have the law concerning the meat-offerings. 1. *The matter of it ; Whether of raw flour with oil and incense, ver. 1. or baked in the oven, ver. 4. or upon a plate, ver. 5, 6. or in a frying pan, ver. 7.* 2. *The management of it—of the flour, ver. 2, 3. of the cakes, ver. 8, 9, 10.* 3. *Some particular rules concerning it, that leaven and honey must never be admitted, ver. 11, 12. and salt never omitted in the meat-offering, ver. 13.* 4. *The law concerning the offering of first-fruits in the ear, ver. 14, 15, 16.*

1. **A**ND when any will offer a meat-offering unto the LORD, his offering shall be of fine flour ; and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon. 2. And he shall bring it to Aarons sons the priests : and he shall take thereof his handful of the flour thereof, and of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof ; and the priest shall burn the memorial of it upon the altar, to be an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD. 3. And the remnant of the meat-offering shall be Aarons and his sons : it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the LORD made by fire. 4. And if thou bring an oblation of a meat-offering baken in the oven, it shall be unleavened cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil. 5. And if thy oblation be a meat-offering baken in a pan, it shall be of fine flour unleavened, mingled with oil. 6. Thou shalt part it in pieces, and pour oil thereon : it is a meat-offering. 7. And if thy oblation be a meat-offering baken in the frying-pan, it shall be made of fine flour with oil. 8. And thou shalt bring the meat-offering, that is made of these things, unto the LORD : and when it is presented unto the priest, he shall bring it unto the altar. 9. And the priest shall take from the meat-offering a memorial thereof, and shall burn it upon the altar : it is an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD. 10. And that which is left of the meat-offering, shall be Aarons and his sons : it is a thing most holy, of the offerings of the LORD made by fire.

There were some meat-offerings that were only appendixes to the burnt-offerings, as that which was offered with the daily sacrifice, *Exod. xxix. 38, 39.* and with the peace-offerings, and these had drink-offerings joined with them, see *Numb. xv. 4, 7, 9, 10.* and in these the quantity was appointed : But the law of this chapter concerns those meat-offerings that were offered by themselves, whenever a man saw cause thus to express his devotion. The first offering we read of in scripture was of this kind, *Gen. iv. 3. Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering.* This sort of offerings was appointed, 1. In condescension to the poor, and their ability, that they who themselves lived only upon bread and cakes, might offer an acceptable offering to God, out of that which was their own coarse and homely fare, and by making for God's altar, as the widow of Sarepta for his prophet, a little cake first, might procure such a blessing upon the handful of meal in the barrel, and the oil in the cruse, as that it may not fail. 2. As a proper acknowledgment of the mercy of God to them in their food ; this was like a quit-rent, by which they testified their dependance upon God, their thankfulness to him, and their expectations from him as their owner, and bountiful benefactor, who giveth to all life and breath, and food convenient. Thus must they honour their Lord with their substance, and in token of their eating and drinking to his glory must consecrate some of their meat and drink to his immediate service. They that now with a grateful charitable heart deal out their bread to the hungry, and provide for the necessities of those that are destitute of daily food ; and when they eat the fat, and drink the sweet themselves, send portions to them for whom nothing is prepared, these offer unto God an acceptable meat-offering. The prophet laments it as one of the direful effects of famine, that thereby the *meat-offering and drink-offering was cut off from the house of the Lord*, *Joel i. 9.* and reckoned it the greatest blessing of plenty, that it would be the revival of them, *Joel ii. 14.*

Now the laws of the meat-offering were these,

1. That the ingredients must always be fine flour and oil, two staple commodities of the land of Canaan, *Deut. viii. 8.* Oil was to them then in their food what butter is now to us. If it was undressed, the oil must be poured upon the flour, *ver. 1.* If cooked, it must be mingled with the flour, *ver. 4, &c.* 2. If it were flour unbaked, besides the oil, it must have frankincense put upon it, which was to be burned with it, *ver. 1, 2.* for the perfuming of the altar ; in allusion to which gospel ministers are said to be a *sweet savour unto God*, 2 Cor. ii. 15. 3. If it was prepared, they might do it various ways, either bake it, or fry it, or mix the flour and oil upon a plate ; for the doing of each of which, conveniencies were provided about the tabernacle. The law was very exact even about those offerings that were least costly, to intimate the cognizance God takes of the religious services performed with a devout mind, even by the poor of his people. 4. It was to be presented by the offerer to the priest, which is called bringing it to the Lord, *ver. 8.* for the priests were God's receivers, and were ordained to offer gifts. 5. Part of it was to be burned upon the altar, for a memorial, *i. e.* in token of their mindfulness of God's bounty to them, in giving them all things richly to enjoy. It was an offering made by fire, *ver. 2, 9.* The consuming of it by fire might mind them that they deserved to have all the fruits of the earth thus burnt up, and that it was of the Lord's mercies that they were not. They might also learn, that as *meats are for the belly, and the belly for meats, so God shall destroy both it and them*, 1 Cor. vi. 13. And that *man lives not by bread alone.* This offering made by fire is here said to be of a *sweet savour unto the Lord* ; and so are our spiritual offerings, which are made by the fire of holy love, particularly that of almsgiving, which is said to be an *odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God*, *Phil. iv. 18.* and *Heb. xiii. 16. With such sacrifices God is well pleased.* 6. The remainder of the meat-offering was to be given to the priests, *ver. 3, 10.* It is a thing most holy, not to be eaten by the offerers, as the peace-offerings, which though holy, were not most holy, but by the priests only, and their families. Thus God provided that they who served at the altar, should live upon the altar, and live comfortably.

11. No meat-offering, which ye shall bring unto the LORD, shall be made with leaven : for ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the LORD made by fire. 12. As for the oblation of the first-fruits, ye shall offer them unto the LORD : but they shall not be burnt on the altar for a sweet savour. 13. And every oblation of the meat-offering shalt thou season with salt ; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from the meat-offering : with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt. 14. And if thou offer a meat-offering of the first-fruits unto the LORD, thou shalt offer for the meat-offering of thy first-fruits, green ears of corn dried by the fire, even corn beaten out of full ears. 15. And thou shalt put oil upon it, and lay frankincense thereon : it is a meat-offering. 16. And the priest shall burn the memorial of it, part of the beaten corn thereof, and part of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof : it is an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

Here, 1. Leaven and honey are forbidden to be put in any of their meat-offerings ; *ver. 11. No leaven nor any honey in any offering made by fire.* (1.) The leaven was forbidden, in remembrance of the unleavened bread they eat when they came out of Egypt. So much dispatch was required in the offerings they made, that it was not convenient they should stay the leavening of them. The New Testament comparing pride and hypocrisy to leaven, because they swell like leaven, and malice and wickedness, which sours like leaven ; we are to understand and improve this as a caution, to take heed of those sins, which will certainly spoil the acceptableness of our spiritual sacrifices. Pure hands must be lifted up without wrath ; and all our gospel feasts kept with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. (2.) Honey was forbidden, though Canaan flowed with it, because *to eat much honey is not good*, *Prov. xxv. 16, 27.* it turns to choler and bitterness in the stomach, though luscious to the taste. Some think, the chief reason why these two things leaven and honey were forbidden was, because the Gentiles used them very much in their sacrifices ; and God's people must not learn or use the way of the heathen, but his services must be the reverse of their idolatrous services ; see *Deut. xii. 30, 31.* Some make this application of this double prohibition ; leaven signifies grief and sadness of spirit, *Psal. lxxiii. 21. My heart was leavened.* Honey signifies sensual pleasure and mirth : In our service of God both these must be avoided, and a mean observed between these extremes, for the sorrow of the world worketh death, and a love to the delights of sense is a great enemy to holy love.

2. Salt is required in all their offerings, *ver. 13.* The altar was the table of the Lord, and therefore salt being always set on our tables, God would have it always used at his. It is called the

the salt of the covenant, because as men confirmed their covenants with each other by eating and drinking together, at all which collations salts were used, so God by accepting his peoples gifts, and feasting them upon his sacrifices, supping with them and they with him, *Rev. iii. 20.* did confirm his covenant with them. Among the ancients salt was a symbol of friendship. The salt for the sacrifice was not brought by the offerers, but was provided at the publick charge, as the wood was, *Ezra vii. 22.* And there was a chamber in the court of the temple called the chamber of salt, in which they laid it up. *Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt?* God would hereby intimate to them, that their sacrifices in themselves were unsavoury. The fairs that are living sacrifices to God must have salt in themselves, for every sacrifice must be salted with salt, *Mark ix. 49, 50.* and our speech must be always with grace, *Col. iv. 6.* so must all our religious performances be seasoned with that salt. Christianity is the salt of the earth.

3. Directions are given about the first-fruits.

(1.) The oblation of their first-fruits at harvest, of which we read *Deut. xxvi. 2.* These were offered to the Lord, not to be burned upon the altar, but to be given to the priests as perquisites of their office, *ver. 12.* And ye shall offer them, i. e. leaven and honey in the oblation of the first-fruits, though they were forbidden in other meat-offerings; for they were proper enough to be eaten by the priests, though not to be burnt upon the altar. The loaves of the first-fruits are particularly ordered to be baked with leaven, *Lev. xxiii. 17.* And we read of the first-fruits of honey brought to the house of God, *2 Chron. xxxi. 5.*

(2.) A meat-offering of their first-fruits: The former was required by the law, this was a free-will offering, *ver. 14, 15, 16.* If a man in a thankful sense of God's goodness to him, in giving him hopes of a plentiful crop, were disposed to bring an offering in kind, immediately out of his field, and present it to God, owning thereby his dependance upon God, and obligations to him, 1. Let him be sure to bring the first ripe and full ears, not such as were small and half withered. Whatever was brought for an offering to God must be the best in its kind, though it were but green ears of corn. We mock God, and deceive our selves, if we think to put him off with a corrupt thing, while we have in our flock a male. 2. These green ears must be dried by the fire, that the corn might be beaten out of them, such as it was. That is not expected from green ears, which one may justly look for from those that have been left to grow full ripe. If those that are young do God's work as well as they can, they shall be accepted, though they cannot do it so well as those that are aged and experienced. God makes the best of green ears of corn, and so must we. 3. Oil and frankincense must be put upon it. Thus (as some allude to this) wisdom and humility must soften and sweeten the spirits and services of young people, and then their green ears of corn shall be acceptable. God takes a particular delight in the first ripe fruits of the Spirit, and the expressions of early piety and devotion. Those that can but think and speak as children, yet if they think and speak well, God will be well pleased with their buds and blossoms, and will never forget the kindness of their youth. 4. It must be used as other meat-offerings; *ver. 16.* compare *ver. 9.* He shall offer all the frankincense, it is an offering made by fire. The fire and the frankincense seem to have had a special significancy. (1.) The fire notes the fervency of spirit which ought to be in all our religious services. In every good thing we must be zealously affected. Holy love to God is the fire by which all our offerings must be made; else they are not of a sweet favour to God. (2.) The frankincense notes the mediation and intercession of Christ, by which all our services are perfumed, and recommended to God's gracious acceptance. Blessed be God that we have the substance which all these observances were but shadows of; the fruit that was hid under these leaves.

C H A P. III.

In this chapter we have the law concerning the peace-offerings, whether they were, 1. Of the herd, a bullock or a heifer, *ver. 1—5.* Or, 2. Of the flock, either a lamb, *ver. 6, 11.* or a goat, *ver. 12, 17.* The ordinances concerning each of these are much the same, yet they are repeated, to shew the care we ought to take that all our services be done according to the appointment, and the pleasure God takes in the services that are so performed. It is likewise to intimate, what need we have of precept upon precept, and line upon line.

1. **A**ND if his oblation be a sacrifice of peace-offering, if he offer it of the herd, whether it be a male or a female, he shall offer it without blemish before the LORD. 2. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aarons sons the priests shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about. 3. And he shall offer of the sacrifice of the peace-offering, an offering made by fire unto the LORD; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the in-

wards: 4. And the two kidneys, and the fat that is on them, which is by the flanks: and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away. 5. And Aarons sons shall burn it on the altar, upon the burnt-sacrifice, which is upon the wood that is on the fire: it is an offering made by fire of a sweet favour unto the LORD.

The burnt-offerings had regard to God, as in himself the best of beings, most perfect and excellent, were purely expressive of adoration, and therefore were wholly burned: But the peace-offerings had regard to God as a benefactor to his creatures, and the giver of all good things to us, and therefore these were divided between the altar, the priest, and the owner. Peace signifies, 1. Reconciliation, concord, and communion. And so these were called peace-offerings, because in them God and his people did as it were feast together, in token of friendship. The priest who was ordained for men in things pertaining to God, gave part of this peace-offering to God, (that part which he required, and it was fit he should be first carved to) burning it upon God's altar: part he gave to the offerer, to be eaten by him with his family and friends; and part he took to himself, as the day's man that laid his hand upon them both. They could not thus eat together, unless they were agreed; so that it was a symbol of friendship and fellowship between God and man, and a confirmation of the covenant of peace. 2. It signifies prosperity and all happiness: *Peace be to you,* was as much as *all good* be to you; and so the peace-offerings were offered either, (1.) By way of supplication or request for some good that was wanted and desired. If a man were in the pursuit or expectation of any mercy, he would back his prayer for it with a peace-offering, and probably put up the prayer then, when he laid his hand upon the head of his offering. Christ is our peace, our peace-offering; for through him alone it is that we can expect to obtain mercy, and an answer of peace to our prayers; and in him an upright prayer shall be acceptable and successful, though we bring not a peace-offering. The less costly our devotions are, the more lively and serious they should be. Or, (2.) By way of thanksgiving for some particular mercy received, it is called a peace-offering of thanksgiving, for so it was sometimes; as in other cases a vow, *Lev. vii. 15, 16.* And some make the original word to signify *retribution*. When they had received any special mercy, and were enquiring what they should render? This they were directed to render to the God of their mercies, as a grateful acknowledgment of the benefit done to them, *Psal. cxvi. 12.* And we must offer to God the sacrifice of praise continually, by Christ our peace; and then this shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock.

Now, 1. As to the matter of the peace-offering, suppose it were of the herd, it must be without blemish, and if it were so, it were indifferent whether it was male or female, *ver. 1.* In our spiritual offerings, it is not the sex, but the heart, that God looks at, *Gal. iii. 28.* 2. As to the management of it. (1.) The offerer was by a solemn manumission to transfer his interest in it to God, *ver. 2.* and with his hand on the head of the sacrifice to acknowledge the particular mercies for which he designed this a thank-offering; or if it were a vow, to make his prayer. (2.) It must be killed; and though that might be done in any part of the court, yet it is said to be at the door of the tabernacle, because the mercies received or expected were acknowledged to come from God, and the prayers or praises were directed to him, and both as it were through that door. Our Lord Jesus hath said, *I am the door*, for he is indeed the door of the tabernacle. (3.) The priest must sprinkle the blood upon the altar, for it was the blood that made atonement for the soul; and though this was not a sin-offering, yet we must be taught, that in all our offerings we must have an eye to Christ as the propitiation for sin, as those that know the best of our services cannot be accepted, unless through him our sins be pardoned. Penitent confessions must always go along with our thankful acknowledgments; and whatever mercy we pray for, in order to it, we must first pray for the removal of guilt, as that which keeps good things from us. First take away all iniquity, and then receive us graciously; or, give good, *Hos. xiv. 2.* (4.) All the fat of the inwards, that which we call the tallow and suet, with the caul that incloseth it, and the kidneys in the midst of it, were to be taken away, and burned upon the altar, as an offering made by fire, *ver. 3, 4, 5.* And that was all that was sacrificed to the Lord out of the peace-offering; how the rest was to be disposed of, we shall find, *chap. vii. 11, &c.* It is ordered to be burnt upon the burnt-sacrifice, i. e. the daily burnt-offering, the lamb which was offered every morning before any other sacrifice was offered, so that the fat of the peace-offerings was an addition to that, and a continuation of it. The great sacrifice of peace, that of the Lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world, prepares the altar for our sacrifices of praise, which are not accepted till we are reconciled. Now the burning of this fat is supposed to signify, 1. The offering up of our good affections to God in all our prayers and praises. God must have the inwards, for we must pour out our souls, and lift up our hearts in prayer, and must bless his name with all that is within us. It is required that we be inward with God in every thing wherein we have to do with him. The fat notes the best and choicest, which must always be devoted to God, who has made for us a feast of fat things. 2. The mortifying of our corrupt

rupt affections and lusts, and the burning up of them by the fire of divine grace, *Col. iii. 5.* Then we are truly thankful for former mercies, and prepared to receive further mercy, when we part with our sins, and have our minds cleared from all sensuality, by the *spirit of judgment*, and the *spirit of burning*, *Isa. iv. 4.*

6. And if his offering for a sacrifice of peace-offering unto the LORD be of the flock, male or female; he shall offer it without blemish. 7. If he offer a lamb for his offering, then shall he offer it before the LORD. 8. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it before the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aarons sons shall sprinkle the blood thereof round about upon the altar. 9. And he shall offer of the sacrifice of the peace-offering, an offering made by fire unto the LORD: the fat thereof, and the whole rump, it shall he take off hard by the back-bone: and the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards. 10. And the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away. 11. And the priest shall burn it upon the altar: it is the food of the offering made by fire unto the LORD. 12. And if his offering be a goat, then he shall offer it before the LORD. 13. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of it, and kill it before the tabernacle of the congregation; and the sons of Aaron shall sprinkle the blood thereof upon the altar round about. 14. And he shall offer thereof his offering, even an offering made by fire unto the LORD; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards. 15. And the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away. 16. And the priest shall burn them upon the altar: it is the food of the offering made by fire, for a sweet savour. All the fat is the LORD's. 17. It shall be a perpetual statute for your generations throughout all your dwellings, that ye eat neither fat nor blood.

Directions are here given concerning the peace-offering, if it were a sheep or a goat. Turtle-doves or young pigeons, which might be brought for whole burnt-offerings, were not allowed for peace-offerings, because they have no fat considerable to be burnt upon the altar; and they would be next nothing if they were to be divided according to the law of the peace-offerings. The laws concerning a lamb or goat, offered for a peace-offering, are much the same with those concerning a beef, and little now occurs here; but, 1. That the rump of the mutton was to be burned with the fat of the inwards upon the altar; the whole rump, *ver. 9.* because in those countries it was very fat and large. Some observe from this, That being a thing never so contemptible God can make it honourable, by applying it to his service. Thus God is said to give more *abundant honour to that part which lacked*, *1 Cor. xii. 23, 24.* 2. That that which was burned upon the altar is called the *food of the offering*, *ver. 11, 16.* It fed the holy fire; it was acceptable to God as our food is to us; and since in the tabernacle God did as it were keep house among them, by the offerings on the altar he kept a good table, as Solomon in his court, *1 Kings iv. 22, &c.* 3. Here is a general rule laid down, that *all the fat is the Lord's*, *ver. 16.* and a law made thereupon, that they *should eat neither fat nor blood*, no not in their private houses, *ver. 17.* (1.) As for the fat, it is not meant of that which is interlarded with the meat; that they might eat, *Neb. viii. 10.* But the fat of the inwards, the suet which was always God's part out of the sacrificed beasts, and therefore they must not eat of it; no not out of the beasts that they killed for their common use. Thus would God preserve the honour of that which was sacred to himself. They must not only not feed upon that very fat which was to be the food of the altar, but not upon any the like, lest the table of the Lord (as the altar is called) if something were not reserved peculiar to it, should become contemptible, and *the fruit thereof, even its meat, contemptible*, *Mal. i. 7, 12.* (2.) The blood was universally forbidden likewise, for the same reason that the fat was, because it was God's part of every sacrifice. The heathen drunk the blood of their sacrifices; hence we read of their *drink-offerings of blood*, *Psal. xvi. 4.* But God would not permit the blood that made atonement to be used as a *common thing*, *Heb. x. 29.* nor will he allow us, though we have the comfort of the atonement made, to assume to our selves any share in the honour of making it. He that glories, let him glory in the Lord, and to his praise let all the blood be poured out.

CHAP. IV.

This chapter is concerning the sin-offering, which was properly intended to make atonement for a sin committed through ignorance; either, 1. By the priest himself, ver. 1—12. Or, 2. By the whole congregation, ver. 13—21. Or, 3. By a ruler, ver. 22—26. Or, 4. By a private person, ver. 27—35.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the LORD (concerning things which ought not to be done) and shall do against any of them; 3. If the priest that is anointed, do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the LORD for a sin-offering. 4. And he shall bring the bullock unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD; and shall lay his hand upon the bullocks head, and kill the bullock before the LORD. 5. And the priest that is anointed, shall take of the bullocks blood, and bring it to the tabernacle of the congregation. 6. And the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle of the blood seven times before the LORD, before the vail of the sanctuary. 7. And the priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the LORD, which is in the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall pour all the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the altar of the burnt-offering; which is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 8. And he shall take off from it all the fat of the bullock for the sin-offering; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards; 9. And the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away. 10. As it was taken off from the bullock of the sacrifice of peace-offerings: and the priest shall burn them upon the altar of the burnt-offering. 11. And the skin of the bullock, and all his flesh, with his head, and with his legs, and his inwards, and his dung, 12. Even the whole bullock shall he carry forth without the camp, unto a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn him on the wood with fire: where the ashes are poured out, shall he be burnt.

The laws contained in the three first chapters seem to have been delivered to Moses at one time: Here begin the statutes of another session, another day. From the throne of glory between the cherubims God delivered these orders: And he enters now upon a subject more new than those before. *Burnt-offerings, meat-offerings, and peace-offerings*, it should seem, had been offered before the giving of the law upon mount Sinai; those sacrifices the patriarchs had not been altogether unacquainted with, *Gen. viii. 20. Exod. xx. 24.* and in those they had respect to sin, to make atonement for that, *Job i. 5.* But the law being now added *because of transgressions*, *Gal. iii. 15.* and entered, that eventually *the offence might abound*, *Rom. v. 20.* they were put into a way of making atonement for sin more particularly, by sacrifice, which was (more than any of the ceremonial institutions) *a shadow of good things to come*, but the substance is Christ, and that one offering of himself, by which he put away sin, and *perfected for ever them which are sanctified*.

The general case supposed, we have *ver. 2.* Where observe, 1. concerning sin in general, That it is described to be against *any of the commandments of the Lord*, for *sin is the transgression of the law*, the divine law: The wits or wills of men, their inventions or their injunctions cannot make that to be sin, which the law of God has not made to be so. It is said likewise *if a soul sin*, for it is not sin, if it be not some way or other the soul's act; hence it is called the *sin of the soul*, *Mich. vi. 7.* and it is the soul that is injured by it, *Prov. viii. 36.* 2. Concerning the sins for which those offerings were appointed. (1.) They are supposed to be overt acts; for had they been to bring a sacrifice for every sinful thought or word, it had been endless: Atonement was made for those in the gross, on the day of expiation, once a year; but these are said to be done against the commandments. (2.) They are supposed to be sins of commission, things which ought not to be done: Omissions are sins, and must come into judgment, but what had been omitted at one time, might be done at another, and so to obey was better than sacrifice: but a commission was past recal. (3.) They are supposed to be sins committed through ignorance: If they were done presumptuously, and with an avowed contempt of the law, and the law-maker, the offender was to be cut off, and there remained *no sacrifice for the sin*, *Heb.*

Heb. x. 26, 27. see Numb. xv. 30. But if the offender were either ignorant of the law, as in divers instances we may suppose many were, so numerous and various were the prohibitions; or were surprised into the sin unawares, the circumstances such as made it evident that his resolution against the sin was sincere, but he was overtaken in it, as the expression is, *Gal. vi. 1.* In this case, relief was provided by the remedial law of the sin-offering. And the Jews say, Those crimes only were to be expiated by sacrifice, if committed ignorantly; for which the criminal was to have been cut off, if it had been done presumptuously.

Now the law begins with the case of the anointed priest, that is, the high priest, suppose he sin through ignorance; for *the law made men priests which had infirmity*; though his ignorance was of all others least excusable, yet he is allowed to bring his offering. His office did not so far excuse his offences, as that it should be forgiven him without a sacrifice; yet it did not so far aggravate it, but that it should be forgiven him, when he did bring his sacrifice. If he sin *according to the sin of the people*; so the case is put, *ver. 3.* which supposeth him in this matter to stand upon the level with other Israelites, and to have no benefit of his clergy at all.

Now the law concerning the sin-offering for the high priest is, 1. That he must bring a bullock without blemish for his sin-offering, *ver. 3.* as valuable an offering as that for the whole congregation, *ver. 14.* whereas for any other ruler, or a common person, *a kid of the goats* should serve, *ver. 23, 28.* This intimated the greatness of the guilt of the sin of a high priest. The eminency of his station, and his relation both to God and to the people, greatly aggravated his offences; see *Rom. ii. 21.* 2. The hand of the offerer must be laid upon the head of the offering, *ver. 4.* with a solemn penitent confession of the sin he had committed, putting it upon the head of the sin-offering, *Rev. xvi. 21.* No remission without confession, *Psal. xxxii. 5.* *Prov. xxviii. 13.* It signified also a confidence in this instituted way of expiating guilt, as a figure of something better yet to come, which they could not steadfastly discern. He that laid his hand on the head of the beast, thereby owned that he deserved to die himself; and it was God's great mercy, that he would please to accept the offering of this beast to die for him. The Jewish writers themselves say, That neither the sin-offering nor the trespass-offering made atonement, but only for those that repent, and believe in their atonement. 3. The bullock must be killed, and a great deal of solemnity there must be in disposing of the blood, for it was *the blood that made atonement, and without shedding of blood there was no remission*, *ver. 5, 6, 7.* Some of the blood of the high priest's sin-offering was to be *sprinkled seven times before the vail*, with an eye towards the mercy-seat, though it was veiled: Some of it was to be put upon the horns of the golden altar, because at that altar the priest himself ministered; and thus was signified the putting away of that pollution, which from his sins did cleave to his services. It likewise serves to illustrate the influence which Christ's satisfaction hath upon the prevalency of his intercession: The blood of his sacrifice is put upon the altar of his incense, and sprinkled before the Lord. When this was done, the remainder of the blood was poured at the foot of the brazen altar. By this rite, the sinner acknowledged that he deserved to have his blood thus poured out like water: It likewise signified the pouring out of the soul before God in true repentance; and typified our Saviour's *pouring out his soul unto death*. 4. The fat of the inwards was to be burned upon the altar of burnt-offering, *ver. 8, 9, 10.* By this the intention of the offering, and of the atonement made by it, was directed to the glory of God, who having been dishonoured by the sin, was thus honoured by the sacrifice. It signified the sharp sufferings of our Lord Jesus, when he was made sin, that is, a sin-offering for us, especially the sorrows of his soul, and his inward agonies. It likewise teacheth us, in conformity to the death of Christ, to crucify the flesh. 5. The head and body of the beast, skin and all, was to be carried without the camp, to a certain place appointed for that purpose, and there burned to ashes, *ver. 11, 12.* This was very significant, 1. Of the duty of repentance, which is the putting away of sin as a detestable thing, which our soul hates. True penitents say to their idols, *Get ye hence*; What have we to do any more with idols? The sin-offering is called sin: What they did to that, we must do to our sins; *the body of sin must be destroyed*, *Rom. vi. 6.* 2. Of the privilege of remission. When God pardons sin, he quite abolisheth it, casts it behind his back; *The iniquity of Judah shall be sought for, and not found.* The apostle takes particular notice of this ceremony, and applies it to Christ, *Heb. xiii. 11, 12, 13.* who suffered without the gate, in the place of a skull, where the ashes of dead men, as those of the altar, were poured out.

13. And if the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance, and the thing be hid from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done somewhat against any of the commandments of the LORD, concerning things which should not be done, and are guilty: 14. When the sin which they have sinned against it is known, then

No. VIII.

the congregation shall offer a young bullock for the sin, and bring him before the tabernacle of the congregation. 15. And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands upon the head of the bullock before the LORD: and the bullock shall be killed before the LORD. 16. And the priest that is anointed shall bring of the bullocks blood to the tabernacle of the congregation. 17. And the priest shall dip his finger in some of the blood, and sprinkle it seven times before the LORD, even before the vail. 18. And he shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar which is before the LORD, that is in the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall pour out all the blood at the bottom of the altar of the burnt-offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 19. And he shall take all his fat from him, and burn it upon the altar. 20. And he shall do with the bullock as he did with the bullock for a sin-offering, so shall he do with this: and the priest shall make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them. 21. And he shall carry forth the bullock without the camp, and burn him as he burned the first bullock: it is a sin-offering for the congregation.

This is the law for expiating the guilt of a national sin, by a sin-offering. If the leaders of the people through mistake, concerning the law, caused them to err, when the mistake was discovered an offering must be brought, that wrath might not come upon the whole congregation. Observe, 1. It is possible that the church may err, and that her guides may mislead her. It is here supposed, that the whole congregation may sin, and sin through ignorance. God will always have a church on earth, but he never said it should be infallible, or perfectly pure from corruption on this side heaven. 2. When a sacrifice was to be offered for the whole congregation, the elders were to lay their hands upon the head of it, three of them at least, as representatives of the people, and agents for them. The sin we suppose to have been some common custom taken up, and used by the generality of the people, upon presumption of its being lawful, which afterwards upon search appeared to be otherwise: In this case the commonness of the usage, received perhaps by tradition from their father, and the vulgar opinion of its being lawful, would not so far excuse them from sin, but that they must bring a sacrifice to make atonement for it. There are many ill customs, and forms of speech which are thought to have no harm in them, and yet may bring guilt and wrath upon a land, which therefore it concerns both to reform, and to intercede with God for the pardon of, *Joel ii. 16.* 3. The blood of this sin-offering, as of the former, was to be *sprinkled seven times before the Lord*, *ver. 17.* It was not to be poured out there, but sprinkled only; for the cleansing virtue of the blood of Christ was then and is still sufficiently signified, and represented by sprinkling, *Isa. lii. 15.* It was to be sprinkled seven times: seven is a number of perfection, because when God had made the world in six days, he rested the seventh; so this signified the perfect satisfaction Christ made, and the compleat cleansing of the souls of the faithful by it; see *Heb. x. 14.* The blood was likewise to be put upon the horns of the incense altar, to which there seems to be an allusion, *Jer. xvii. 1.* where the sin of Judah is said to be graven upon the horns of their altars. They not forsaking their sins, the putting of the blood of their sin-offerings upon the horns of their altars, instead of taking away their guilt, did but bind it on the faster, perpetuated the remembrance of it, and remained a witness against them. It is likewise alluded to *Rev. ix. 13.* where a voice is *heard from the four horns of the golden altar*, i. e. An answer of peace is given to the prayers of the saints, which are acceptable and prevalent, only by virtue of the blood of the sin-offering put upon the horns of that altar, compare *Rev. viii. 3.* 4. When the offering is completed, it is said *atonement is made*, and the sin shall be forgiven, *ver. 20.* The promise of remission is founded upon the atonement. It is spoken here of the forgiveness of the sin of the whole congregation, i. e. the turning away of those national judgments which the sin deserved. Note, The saving of churches and kingdoms from ruin is owing to the satisfaction and mediation of Christ.

22. When a ruler hath sinned, and done somewhat through ignorance against any of the commandments of the LORD his God, concerning things which should not be done, and is guilty; 23. Or if his sin, wherein he hath sinned, come to his knowledge: he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a male without blemish. 24. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the goat, and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt-offering before the LORD: it is a sin-offering. 25. And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin-offering with

his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt-offering, and shall pour out his blood at the bottom of the altar of burnt-offering. 26. And he shall burn all his fat upon the altar, as the fat of the sacrifice of peace-offerings: and the priest shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him.

Observe here, 1. That God takes notice of, and is displeased with, the sins of rulers. They who have power to call others to account, are themselves accountable to the ruler of rulers; for as high as they are, there is a higher than they. This is intimated, in that here only the commandment transgressed is said to be the *commandment of his Lord his God*, ver. 22. He is a prince to others, but let him know the Lord is a God to him. 2. The sin of the ruler which he committed through ignorance, is supposed afterwards to come to his knowledge, ver. 23. which must be either by the check of his own conscience, or by the reproof of his friends, both which we should all, even the best and greatest, not only submit to, but be thankful for. What we have done amiss, we should be very desirous to come to the knowledge of: *That which I see not, teach thou me, and shew me wherein I have erred*; are prayers we should put up to God every day; that though through ignorance we fall into sin, we may not through ignorance lie still in it. 3. The sin-offering for a ruler was to be a kid of the goats, not a bullock, as for the priest, and the whole congregation: nor was the blood of his sin-offering to be brought into the tabernacle, as of the other two, but it was all bestowed upon the brazen altar, ver. 25. Nor was the flesh of it to be burnt, as that of the other two, without the camp; which intimated, that the sin of a ruler, though worse than that of a common person, yet was not so heinous, nor of such pernicious consequence, as the sin of the high priest, or of the whole congregation. A kid of the goats was sufficient to be offered for a ruler, but a bullock for a tribe; as if the ruler though *major singulis* were *minor universis*. It is bad when great men give ill examples, but worse when all men follow them. 4. It is promised, that the atonement shall be accepted, and the sin forgiven, ver. 26. to wit, if he repent and reform; for otherwise God sware concerning Eli, a judge in Israel, that the iniquity of his house should not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever, 1 Sam. iii. 14.

27. And if any one of the common people sin through ignorance, while he doth somewhat against any of the commandments of the LORD, concerning things which ought not to be done, and be guilty; 28. Or if his sin which he hath sinned, come to his knowledge: then he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he hath sinned. 29. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin-offering, and slay the sin-offering in the place of the burnt-offering. 30. And the priest shall take of the blood thereof with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt-offering, and shall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar. 31. And he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat is taken away from off the sacrifice of peace-offerings; and the priest shall burn it upon the altar, for a sweet savour unto the LORD, and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him. 32. And if he bring a lamb for a sin-offering, he shall bring it a female without blemish. 33. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin-offering, and slay it for a sin-offering in the place where they kill the burnt-offering. 34. And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin-offering, with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt-offering, and shall pour all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar. 35. And he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat of the lamb is taken away from the sacrifice of the peace-offerings, and the priest shall burn them upon the altar, according to the offerings made by fire unto the LORD: and the priest shall make an atonement for his sin that he hath committed, and it shall be forgiven him.

Here is the law of the sin-offering for a common person, which differs from that for a ruler only in this, that a private person might bring either a kid or a lamb, a ruler only a kid; and that for a ruler must be a male, the other a female: In all the circumstances of the management of the offering they agreed. Observe, 1. The case supposed is, *If any one of the common people sin through ignorance*, ver. 27. The prophet supposeth that they were not so likely as the great men to *know the way of the Lord, and the judgment of their God*, Jer. v. 4. and yet if they sin through ignorance, they must bring a sin-offering. Note, Even sins of ignorance need to be atoned for by sacrifice. To be able to plead,

when we are charged with sin, that we did it ignorantly, and through the surprize of temptation, will not bring us off, if we be not interested in that great plea, *Christ hath died*, and intitled to the benefit of that. We have all need to pray with David, (and he was a ruler) to be cleansed from secret faults, the errors which we our selves do not understand, or are not aware of; *Psal. xix. 13.* 2. That the sins of ignorance committed by a single person, a common obscure person, did require a sacrifice; for as the greatest are not above the censure, so the meanest are not below the cognizance of the divine justice. None of the common people, if offenders, were overlooked in a crowd. 3. That a sin-offering was not admitted, but only accepted, even from one of the common people, and an atonement made by it, ver. 31, 35. Here rich and poor, prince and peasant, meet together, they are both alike welcome to Christ, and to an interest in his sacrifice upon the same terms; see *Job xxxiv. 19.* From all these laws concerning the sin-offerings we may learn, (1.) To hate sin, and to watch against it. That is certainly a very ill thing, to make atonement for which, so many innocent and useful creatures must be slain and mangled thus. (2.) To value Christ, the great and true sin-offering, whose blood cleanseth from all sin, which it was not possible the blood of bulls and of goats should take away. *Now if any man sin*, Christ is the propitiation, 1 John ii. 1; 2. not for Jews only, but for Gentiles: And perhaps there was some allusion to this law, concerning sacrifices for sins of ignorance, in that prayer of Christ's, just when he was offering up himself a sacrifice, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

CHAP. V.

This chapter, and part of the next, concern the trespass-offering. The difference between this and the sin-offering, lay not so much in the sacrifices themselves, and the management of them, as in the occasions of the offering of them. They were both intended to make atonement for sin, but the former was more general, this applied to some particular instances. Observe what is here said, 1. Concerning the trespass. If a man sin, (1.) in concealing his knowledge, when he is adjured, ver. 1. (2.) In touching an unclean thing, ver. 2, 3. (3.) In swearing, ver. 4. (4.) In embezzling the holy things, ver. 14—16. (5.) In any sin of infirmity, ver. 17—19. Some other cases there are, in which these offerings were to be offered, chap. vi. 2, 3, 4. xiv. 12. xix. 21. Numb. vi. 12. 2. Concerning the trespass-offerings. (1.) Of the flock, ver. 5, 6. (2.) Of fowls, ver. 7—10. (3.) Of flour, ver. 11—13. But chiefly a ram without blemish, ver. 15, 16, 18, 19.

1. **A**ND if a soul sin, and hear the voice of swearing, and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known of it; if he do not utter it, then he shall bear his iniquity. 2. Or if a soul touch any unclean thing, whether it be a carcase of an unclean beast, or a carcase of unclean cattel, or the carcase of unclean creeping things, and if it be hid from him, he also shall be unclean and guilty. 3. Or if he touch the uncleanness of man, whatsoever uncleanness it be that a man shall be defiled withal, and it be hid from him, when he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty. 4. Or if a soul swear, pronouncing with his lips to do evil, or to do good; whatsoever it be that a man shall pronounce with an oath, and it be hid from him; when he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty in one of these. 5. And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing. 6. And he shall bring his trespass-offering unto the LORD for his sin which he hath sinned, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats, for a sin-offering: and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin.

The offences here supposed, are, 1. A man's concealing the truth, when he was sworn as a witness to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Judges among the Jews had power to adjure not only the witnesses, as with us, but the person suspected (contrary to a rule of our law, that no man is bound to accuse himself) as appears by the high priest's adjuring our Saviour, who thereupon answered, though before he stood silent, *Matt. xxvi. 63.* Now, ver. 1. *If a soul sin*, (i. e. a person, for the soul is the man) if he *hear the voice of swearing*, i. e. if he be adjured to testify what he knows, by an *oath of the Lord* upon him, 1 Kings viii. 31. If, in such a case, for fear of offending one that either has been his friend, or may be his enemy, he refuseth to give evidence, or gives it but in part, *he shall bear his iniquity*. And that is a heavy burthen, which, if some course be not taken to get it removed, will sink a man to the lowest hell. He that *heareth cursing*, i. e. that is thus adjured, and bewrayeth it not, i. e. stifles his evidence, and doth not utter it, he is a partner with the sinner, and *hateth his own soul*; see *Prov. xxix. 24.* Let all that are called at any time to bear testimony, think of this law, and be free and open in their evidence, and take heed of prevaricating. An oath of the Lord is a sacred thing, and not to be dallied

dallied with. 2. A man's touching any thing that was ceremonially unclean, *ver. 2, 3.* If a man polluted by such touch came into the sanctuary inconsiderately, or if he neglected to wash himself according to the law, then he was to look upon himself as under guilt, and must bring his offering. Though his touching the unclean thing contracted only a ceremonial defilement, yet his neglect to wash himself according to the law, was such an instance, either of carelessness or contempt, as contracted a moral guilt. If at first it be hid from him, yet when he knows it, he *shall be guilty.* Note, As soon as ever God by his Spirit convinceth our consciences of any sin or duty, we must presently set in with the conviction, and prosecute it, as those that are not ashamed to own our former mistake. 3. Rash swearing, that a man will do or not do such a thing, if the performance of his oath afterwards prove either unlawful or impracticable, by which he is discharged from the obligation; yet he must bring an offering to atone for his folly in swearing so rashly, as David that he would kill Nabal. And then it was that he must *say before the angel*, that it *was an error*, Eccl. v. 6. *Ver. 4. He shall be guilty in one of these:* guilty if he do not perform his oath; and yet, if the matter of it were evil, guilty if he do. Such wretched dilemmas as these do some men bring themselves into, by their own rashness and folly; go which way they will their consciences are wounded; sin stares them in the face, so sadly are they *snared in the words of their mouth.* A more sad dilemma this is than that of the lepers, If we sit still we die, if we stir we die. Wisdom and watchfulness beforehand would prevent these straits.

Now in these cases, (1.) The offender must confess his sin, and bring his offering, *ver. 5, 6.* and the offering was not accepted unless it was accompanied with a penitential confession, and a humble prayer for pardon. Observe, The confession must be particular, *that he hath sinned in that thing*; such was David's confession, *Psal. li. 4. I have done this evil*; and Achan's, *Josh. vii. 20. Thus and thus have I done.* Deceit lies in generals; many will own in general they have sinned, for that all must own, so that it is not any particular reproach to them; but that they have sinned *in this thing*, they stand too much upon their honour to acknowledge: but the way to be well assured of pardon, and to be well armed against sin for the future, is to be particular in our penitent confessions. (2.) The priest must *make an atonement for him.* As the atonement was not accepted without his repentance, so his repentance would not justify him without the atonement. Thus in our reconciliation to God, Christ's part and ours are both needful.

7. And if he be not able to bring a lamb, then he shall bring for his trespass which he hath committed, two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, unto the LORD; one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering. 8. And he shall bring them unto the priest, who shall offer that which is for the sin-offering first, and wring off his head from his neck, but shall not divide it asunder. 9. And he shall sprinkle of the blood of the sin-offering upon the side of the altar; and the rest of the blood shall be wrung out at the bottom of the altar: it is a sin-offering. 10. And he shall offer the second for a burnt-offering, according to the manner: and the priest shall make an atonement for him, for his sin which he had sinned, and it shall be forgiven him. 11. But if he be not able to bring two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons; then he that sinned, shall bring for his offering the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a sin-offering: he shall put no oil upon it, neither shall he put any frankincense thereon: for it is a sin-offering. 12. Then shall he bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it, even a memorial thereof, and burn it on the altar, according to the offerings made by fire unto the LORD, it is a sin-offering. 13. And the priest shall make an atonement for him, as touching his sin that he hath sinned in one of these, and it shall be forgiven him: and the remnant shall be the priests, as a meat-offering.

Provision is here made for the poor of God's people, and the pacifying of their consciences under the sense of guilt. Those that were not able to bring a lamb, might bring for a sin-offering a pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons; nay, if any were so extremely poor, that they were not able to procure those, so oft as they would have occasion, they might bring a pottle of fine flour, and that should be accepted. Thus the expence of the sin-offering was brought lower than that of any other offering, to teach us, that no man's poverty shall ever be a bar in the way of his pardon. The poorest of all may have atonement made for them, if it be not their own fault. Thus the poor are evangelized; and no man shall say, that he had not wherewithal to bear the charges of a journey to heaven.

Now, 1. If the sinner brought two doves, one was to be offered for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering, *ver. 7.* Observe, (1.) Before he offered the burnt-offering, which was for

the honour and praise of God, he must offer the sin-offering to make atonement. We must first see to it that our peace be made with God, and then we may expect that our services for his glory will be accepted. The sin-offering must make way for the burnt-offering. (2.) After the sin-offering, which made atonement, came the burnt-offering, as an acknowledgment of the great mercy of God, in appointing and accepting the atonement.

2. If he brought fine flour, a handful of it was to be offered, but without either oil or frankincense, *ver. 11.* not only because that would make it too costly for the poor, for whose comfort this sacrifice was appointed, but because it was a sin-offering, and therefore to shew the loathsomeness of the sin for which it was offered, it must not be made grateful either to the taste by oil, or to the smell by frankincense. The unfavorableness of the offering was to intimate that the sinner must never relish his sin again as he had done. God by these sacrifices did speak, (1.) Comfort to those that had offended, that they might not despair, or pine away in their iniquity, but peace being thus made for them with God, they might have peace in him. (2.) Caution likewise not to offend any more, remembering what an expensive troublesome thing it was to make atonement.

14. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 15. If a soul commit a trespass, and sin through ignorance, in the holy things of the LORD, then he shall bring for his trespass unto the LORD, a ram without blemish out of the flocks, with thy estimation by shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass-offering. 16. And he shall make amends for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing, and shall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass-offering, and it shall be forgiven him. 17. And if a soul sin, and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the LORD; though he wist it not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity. 18. And he shall bring a ram without blemish out of the flock, with thy estimation for a trespass-offering, unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him, concerning his ignorance wherein he erred and wist it not; and it shall be forgiven him. 19. It is a trespass-offering: he hath certainly trespassed against the LORD.

Hitherto in this chapter orders were given concerning those sacrifices that were both sin-offerings and trespass-offerings, for they go by both names, *ver. 6.* Here we have the law concerning those that were properly and peculiarly trespass-offerings, which were offered to atone for trespasses done against a neighbour; those sins we commonly call trespasses. Now injuries done to another may be either in holy things, or in common things; of the former we have the law in these verses; of the latter, in the beginning of the next chapter. If a man *did harm* (as it is *ver. 16.*) *in the holy things of the Lord*, he thereby committed a trespass against the priests, the Lord's ministers, who were intrusted with the care of these holy things, and had the benefit of them. Now if a man did alienate or convert to his own use any thing that was dedicated to God, unwittingly, he was to bring this sacrifice: as suppose, he had ignorantly made use of the tithes, or first-fruits, or first-born of his cattle, or (which it should seem by *Lev. xxii. 14, 15, 16.* is principally meant here) had eaten any of those parts of the sacrifices, which were appropriated to the priests, this was a trespass. It is supposed to be done through mistake, or forgetfulness, for want either of care or zeal; for if it were done presumptuously, and in contempt of the law, the offender died without mercy, *Heb. x. 28.* But in case of negligence and ignorance, this sacrifice was appointed; and Moses is told,

1. What must be done, in case the trespass appeared to be certain. The trespasser must (1.) bring an offering to the Lord, which in all those that were purely trespass-offerings, must be a *ram without blemish*, of the second year, say the Jewish doctors. (2.) He must likewise make restitution to the priest, according to a just estimation of the thing which he had so alienated, adding a fifth part to it, that he might learn to take more heed next time of embezzling what was sacred to God, finding to his cost that there was nothing got by it, and that he paid dear for his oversights.

2. What must be done in case it were doubtful, whether he had trespassed or no; he had cause to suspect it, but he wist it not, *ver. 17. i. e.* he was not very certain; in this case, because it is good to be sure, he must bring his trespass-offering, and the value of that which he feared he had embezzled; only he was not to add the fifth part to it: Now this was designed to shew the very great evil there is in sacrilege; Achan, that was guilty of it presumptuously, died for it; so did Ananias and Sapphira: But this goes further, to shew the evil of it, that if a man had but through ignorance and unwittingly alienated the holy things, nay, if he did but suspect that he had done so, he must be at the expence, not only of a full restitution with interest, but of an offering, at the trouble of bringing

ing it, and must take shame to himself by making confession of it; so ill a thing is it to invade God's property, and so cautious should we be to abstain from all appearances of this evil. We are also taught here to be jealous over our selves with a godly jealousy, to ask pardon for the sin, and make satisfaction for the wrong, we do but suspect our selves guilty of. In doubtful cases we should take and keep the safer side.

C H A P. VI.

The seven first verses of this chapter would fitly have been added to the foregoing chapter, being a continuation of the law of the trespass-offering, and the putting of other cases in which it was to be offered; and with this end the instructions God gave concerning the several kinds of sacrifices that should be offered: And then at ver. 8. (which in the original begins a new section of the law) he comes to appoint the several rites and ceremonies concerning these sacrifices, which had not been mentioned before.
 1. The burnt-offering, ver. 8—13. 2. The meat-offering, ver. 14—18. particularly that at the consecration of the priest, ver. 19—23. 3. The sin-offering, ver. 24—30.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the LORD, and lye unto his neighbour in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowship, or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbour; 3. Or have found that which was lost, and lyeth concerning it, and sweareth falsely; in any of all these that a man doth, sinning therein: 4. Then it shall be, because he hath sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found, 5. Or all that about which he hath sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass-offering. 6. And he shall bring his trespass-offering unto the LORD, a ram without blemish out of the flock, with thy estimation, for a trespass-offering, unto the priest. 7. And the priest shall make an atonement for him, before the LORD; and it shall be forgiven him, for any thing of all that he hath done, in trespassing therein.

This is the latter part of the law of the trespass-offering: the former part, which concerned trespasses about holy things, we had in the close of the foregoing chapter; this concerns trespasses in common things. Observe here, 1. The trespass supposed, ver. 2, 3. Though all the instances relate to our neighbour, yet it is called a *trespass against the Lord*; because though the injury be done immediately to our neighbour, yet an affront is thereby given to his maker, and our master. He that *speaks evil of his brother*, is said to *speak evil of the law*, and consequently of the law-maker, James iv. 11. Though the person injured be never so mean and despicable, and every way our inferior, yet the injury reflects upon that God, who has made the command of loving our neighbour second to that of loving himself. The trespasses instanced in are, (1.) Denying a trust; *If a man lye unto his neighbour in that which was delivered him to keep*; or which is worse, which was lent him for his use. If we claim that as our own, which is only borrowed, left in our custody, or committed to our care, this is a *trespass against the Lord*, who, for the benefit of human society, will have property and truth maintained. (2.) Defrauding a partner; *If a man lye in fellowship*, claiming a sole interest in that wherein he has but a joint interest. (3.) Disowning a manifest wrong; *If a man hath the front to lye in a thing taken away by violence*, which ordinarily cannot be hid. (4.) Deceiving in commerce; or, as some think, by false accusation; if a man hath *deceitfully oppressed* his neighbour, as some read it, either withholding what is due, or extorting what is not. (5.) Detaining what is found, and denying it; ver. 3. If a man has *found that which was lost*, he must not call it his own presently, but endeavour to find out the owner, to whom it must be returned; this is doing as we would be done by: but he that *lies concerning it*, that faith he knows nothing of it, when he doth, especially if he back that lye with a false oath, he *trespasseth against the Lord*, who to every thing that is said is a witness, but to an oath he is the party appealed to, and highly affronted when he is called to witness to a lye.

2. The trespass-offering appointed. (1.) *In the day of his trespass-offering* he must make satisfaction to his brother. This must be first done, *if thy brother hath ought against thee*, ver. 4, 5. because he hath sinned and *is guilty*, i. e. is convicted of his guilt by his own conscience, and is touched with remorse for it; seeing himself guilty before God, let him faithfully restore all that he has got by fraud or oppression, with a fifth part added, to make amends to the owner for the loss and trouble he had suf-

tained in the mean time; let him account both for debt and damages. Note, Where wrong has been done, restitution must be made; and till it is made to the utmost of our power, or an equivalent accepted by the person wronged, we cannot have the comfort of the forgiveness of the sin, for the keeping of what is unjustly got, avows the taking; and both together make but one continued act of unrighteousness. To repent is to undo what we have done amiss, which (whatever we pretend) we cannot be said to do, till we restore what has been got by it, as Zaccheus, Luke xix. 8. and make satisfaction for the wrong done. 2. He must *then come and offer his gift*, must bring his *trespass-offering* to the Lord, whom he had offended, and the priest must make an atonement for him, ver. 6, 7. This trespass-offering could not of itself make satisfaction for sin, or reconciliation between God and the sinner, but as it signified the atonement that was to be made by our Lord Jesus, when he should make his soul an offering for sin, a *trespass-offering*, it is the same word that is here used, Isa. liii. 10. The trespasses here mentioned, are trespasses still, against the law of Christ, which insists as much upon justice and truth as ever the law of nature, or the law of Moses did: and though now we may have them pardoned without a trespass-offering, yet not without true repentance, restitution, reformation, and an humble faith in the righteousness of Christ; and if any make the more bold with these sins, because they are not now put to the expence of a trespass-offering for them, they *turn the grace of God into wantonness*, and so bring upon themselves a swift destruction. The Lord is the avenger of all such, 1 Thess. iv. 6.

8. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 9. Command Aaron and his sons, saying, This is the law of the burnt-offering: (It is the burnt-offering, because of the burning upon the altar all night unto the morning, and the fire of the altar shall be burning in it) 10. And the priest shall put on his linen garment, and his linen breeches shall he put upon his flesh, and take up the ashes which the fire hath consumed with the burnt-offering on the altar, and he shall put them besides the altar. 11. And he shall put off his garments, and put on other garments, and carry forth the ashes without the camp, unto a clean place. 12. And the fire upon the altar shall be burning in it, it shall not be put out: and the priest shall burn the wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt-offering in order upon it, and he shall burn thereon the fat of the peace-offerings. 13. The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar: it shall never go out.

Hitherto are the instructions given to Moses concerning the sacrifices he was to give to the people, but here begin the instructions he was to give to the priests, he must *command Aaron and his sons*, ver. 9. The priests were rulers in the house of God, but these rulers must be ruled; and they that had the command of others, must themselves be commanded. Let ministers remember, that not only commissions but commands were given to Aaron and his sons, who must be in subjection to them.

In these verses we have the law of the burnt-offering, as far as it was the peculiar care of the priests. The daily sacrifice of a lamb, which was offered morning and evening for the whole congregation, is here chiefly referred to. 1. The priest must take care of the ashes of the burnt-offering, that they be decently disposed of, ver. 10, 11. He must clear the altar of them every morning, and put them on the east-side of the altar, which was furthest from the sanctuary; this he must do in his linen garment, which he always wore when he did any service at the altar; and then he must shift himself, and put on other garments, either such as were his common wear, or (as some think) other priestly garments less honourable, and must *carry the ashes unto a clean place without the camp*. Now, (1.) God would have this done for the honour of his altar, and the sacrifices that were burned upon it. Even the ashes of the sacrifice must be preserved, to testify the regard God had to it: by the burnt-offering he was honoured, and therefore thus it was honoured. And some think this care that was taken of the ashes of the sacrifice, typified the burial of our Saviour; his dead body (the ashes of his sacrifice) was carefully laid up in a garden, in a new sepulchre, which was a *clean place*. It was also requisite that the altar should be kept as clean as might be, the fire upon it would burn the better; and it is decent in a house to have a clean fire-side. (2.) God would have the priests themselves to do it, to teach them and us, to stoop to the meanest services for the honour of God, and of his altar. The priest himself must not only kindle the fire, but clean the hearth, and carry out the ashes. God's servants must think nothing below them, but sin.

2. The priest must take care of the fire upon the altar, that that should be kept *always burning*. This is much insisted on here, ver. 9, 12. and this express law given, ver. 13. *The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar, it shall never go out*. We may suppose no day passed without some extraordinary sacrifices, which were always offered between the morning and evening lamb; so that from morning to night the fire on the altar was kept up of course:

course : But to preserve it *all night unto the morning*, ver. 9. required some care. Those that keep good houses never let their kitchen fire go out ; therefore God would thus give an instance of his good house-keeping. The first fire upon the altar came from heaven, Lev. ix. 24. so that by keeping that up continually, with constant supply of fuel, all their sacrifices throughout all their generations might be said to be consumed with that fire from heaven, in token of God's acceptance. If through carelessness they should ever let it go out, they could not expect to have it so kindled again. Accordingly, the Jews tell us, that the fire never did go out upon the altar till the captivity in Babylon. This is referred to, Isa. xxxi. 9. where God is said to have his fire in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem. By this law we are taught to keep up in our minds a constant disposition to all acts of piety and devotion, an habitual affection to divine things, so as to be always ready to every good word and work. We must not only not *quench the Spirit*, but we must *stir up the gift* that is in us. Though we be not always sacrificing, yet we must keep the fire of holy love always burning, and thus we must pray always.

14. And this is the law of the meat-offering : the sons of Aaron shall offer it before the LORD, before the altar. 15. And he shall take of it his handful, of the flour of the meat-offering, and of the oil thereof, and all the frankincense which is upon the meat-offering, and shall burn it upon the altar, for a sweet savour, even the memorial of it unto the LORD. 16. And the remainder thereof shall Aaron and his sons eat : with unleavened bread shall it be eaten in the holy place : in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation they shall eat it. 17. It shall not be baken with leaven : I have given it unto them for their portion of my offerings made by fire : it is most holy, as is the sin-offering, and as the trespass-offering. 18. All the males among the children of Aaron shall eat of it : It shall be a statute for ever in your generations concerning the offerings of the LORD made by fire : Every one that toucheth them shall be holy. 19. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 20. This is the offering of Aaron, and of his sons, which they shall offer unto the LORD, in the day when he is anointed ; the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a meat-offering perpetual, half of it in the morning, and half thereof at night. 21. In a pan it shall be made with oil, and when it is baken, thou shalt bring it in : and the baken pieces of the meat-offering shalt thou offer for a sweet savour unto the LORD. 22. And the priest of his sons that is anointed in his stead, shall offer it : It is a statute for ever unto the LORD, it shall be wholly burnt. 23. For every meat-offering for the priest shall be wholly burnt : it shall not be eaten.

The meat-offering was either that which was offered by the people, or that by the priests at their consecration. Now, 1. As to the common meat-offering, only a handful of it was to be burnt upon the altar, all the rest was allowed to the priests, for their food. The law of the burnt-offerings was such as imposed upon the priests a great deal of care and work, but allowed them little profit ; for the flesh was wholly burnt, and the priests had nothing but the skin : But to make them amends, the greatest part of the meat-offering was their own. The burning of a handful of it upon the altar, ver. 15. was ordered before, chap. ii. 9. Here the remainder of it is consigned to the priests, the servants of God's house. *I have given it unto them, for their portion of my offerings*, ver. 17. Note, 1. It is the will of God, that his ministers should be well provided for with food convenient ; and what is given to them, he accepts, as offered to himself if it be done with a single eye. 2. All christians, being spiritual priests, do themselves share in the spiritual sacrifices they offer. It is not God that is the gainer by them ; the handful burnt upon the altar was not worth speaking of, in comparison with the priest's share ; we ourselves are the gainers by our religious services. Let God have all the frankincense, and the priests shall have the flour and the oil : what we give to God the praise and glory of, we may take to our selves the comfort and benefit of.

The laws concerning the eating of it were, 1. That it must be eaten unleavened, ver. 16. What was offered to God must have no leaven in it, and the priests must have it as the altar had it, and no otherwise. Thus must we keep the feasts of the Lord with the *unleavened bread of sincerity and truth*. 2. It must be eaten in the court of the tabernacle ; (here called the holy place) in some room prepared by the side of the court for this purpose : It was a great crime to carry any of it out of the court. The very eating of it was a sacred rite by which they were to honour God ; and therefore it must be done in a religious manner, and with a holy reverence, which was preserved by confining it to the holy place. 3. The males only must eat of it, ver. 18. Of the lesser holy things, as the first-fruits and tithes, and the shoulder

and breasts of the peace-offerings, the daughters of the priests might eat, for they might be carried out of the court ; but this was of the most holy things, which being to be eaten only in the tabernacle, the sons of Aaron only might eat of it. 4. The priests only that were clean might eat of it ; *Every one that toucheth them shall be holy*, ver. 18. Holy things for holy persons. Some read it, *Every thing that toucheth it shall be holy* : all the furniture of the table on which these holy things were eaten, must be appropriated to that use only, and never after used as common things.

2. As to the consecration meat-offering, which was offered for the priests themselves, it was to be *wholly burnt, and none of it eaten*, ver. 23. It comes in here as an exception to the foregoing law. It should seem that this law concerning the meat-offering of initiation did only oblige the high priest to offer it, and on that day only that he was anointed, and so for his successors in the day they were anointed. But the Jewish writers say, that by this law every priest, on the day he first entered upon his ministry, was bound to offer this meat-offering ; and that the high priest was bound to offer it every day of his life, from the day in which he was anointed ; and that it was to be offered besides the meat-offering that attended the morning and evening sacrifice, because it is said here to be a *meat-offering perpetual*, ver. 20. Josephus saith, the high priest sacrificed twice every day at his own charges, and this was his sacrifice. Note, Those whom God hath advanced above others in dignity and power, ought to consider, that he expects more from them than from others, and should take every the least intimation of service to be done for him. The meat-offering of the priest was to be baken as if it were to be eaten, and yet it must be wholly burnt. Though the priest that ministered was to be paid for serving the people, yet no reason he should be paid for serving the high priest, who was the father of the family of the priests, and whom therefore any priest should take a pleasure in serving gratis. Nor was it fit that the priests should eat of the offerings of a priest ; for as the sins of the people were typically transferred to the priests, which was signified by their eating of their offerings, Hof. iv. 8. so the sins of the priests must be typically transferred to the altar, which therefore must eat up all their offerings. We are all undone, both ministers and people, if we must *bear our own iniquity* ; nor could we have had any comfort or hope, if God had not laid on his dear son the iniquity of us all, and he is both the priest, and the altar.

24. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 25. Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, saying, This is the law of the sin-offering : In the place where the burnt-offering is killed, shall the sin-offering be killed before the LORD : it is most holy. 26. The priest that offereth it for sin, shall eat it : in the holy place shall it be eaten, in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation. 27. Whatsoever shall touch the flesh thereof shall be holy : and when there is sprinkled of the blood thereof upon any garment, thou shalt wash that whereon it was sprinkled in the holy place. 28. But the earthen vessel wherein it is sodden, shall be broken : and if it be sodden in a brazen pot, it shall be both scoured, and rinsed in water. 29. All the males among the priests shall eat thereof : it is most holy. 30. And no sin-offering whereof any of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of the congregation to reconcile withal in the holy place, shall be eaten : it shall be burnt in the fire.

We have here so much of the law of the sin-offering, as did peculiarly concern the priests that offered it. As, 1. That it must be killed in the place where the burnt-offering was killed, ver. 25. that was on the north side of the altar, chap. i. 11. which some think typified the crucifying of Christ on mount Calvary, which was on the north side of Jerusalem. 2. That the priest who offered it for the sinner, was (with his sons, or other priests, ver. 29.) to eat the flesh of it, after the blood and fat had been offered to God, in the court of the tabernacle, ver. 26. Hereby they were to *bear the iniquity of the congregation*, as it is explained, chap. x. 17. 3. The blood of the sin-offering was with great reverence to be washed out of the clothes on which it happened to light, ver. 27. which signified the awful regard we ought to have to the blood of Christ, not counting it a common thing. That blood must be sprinkled on the conscience, not on the raiment. 4. The vessel in which the flesh of the sin-offering was boiled, must be broken, if it were an earthen one ; and if a brazen one, well washed, ver. 28. This intimated, that the defilement was not wholly taken away by the offering, but did rather cleave to it, such was the weakness and deficiency of those sacrifices ; but the blood of Christ thoroughly cleanseth from all sin, and after it there needs no cleansing. 5. That all this must be understood of the common sin-offerings, not of those for the priest, or the body of the congregation, either occasional, or stated upon the day of atonement ; for it had been before ordained, and was now ratified, that if the blood of the offering was brought into the holy place, as it was in those extraordinary cases, the flesh was not to

be eaten, but burnt without the camp, *ver.* 30. Hence the apostle infers the advantage we have under the gospel, above what they had under the law; for though the blood of Christ was brought into the tabernacle, to reconcile within the holy place, yet we have a right by faith to eat of the altar, Heb. xiii. 10, 11, 12. and so to take the comfort of the great propitiation.

C H A P. VII.

Here is, 1. The law of the trespass-offering, *ver.* 1—7. with some further directions concerning the burnt-offering and the meat-offering, *ver.* 8—10. 2. The law of the peace-offering. The eating of it, *ver.* 11—21. on which occasion the prohibition of eating of fat or blood is repeated, *ver.* 22—27. And the priests share of it, *ver.* 28—34. 3. The conclusion of these institutions, *ver.* 35—38.

1. **L**ikewise this is the law of the trespass-offering: it is most holy. 2. In the place where they kill the burnt-offering, shall they kill the trespass-offering: and the blood thereof shall he sprinkle round about upon the altar. 3. And he shall offer of it all the fat thereof; the rump, and the fat that covereth the inwards. 4. And the two kidneys, and the fat that is on them, which is by the flanks, and the caul that is above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away. 5. And the priest shall burn them upon the altar, for an offering made by fire unto the LORD: it is a trespass-offering. 6. Every male among the priests shall eat thereof: it shall be eaten in the holy place: it is most holy. 7. As the sin-offering is, so is the trespass-offering: there is one law for them: the priest that maketh atonement therewith, shall have it. 8. And the priest that offereth any man's burnt-offering, even the priest shall have to himself the skin of the burnt-offering which he hath offered. 9. And all the meat-offering that is baken in the oven, and all that is dressed in the frying-pan, and in the pan, shall be the priests that offereth it. 10. And every meat-offering mingled with oil, and dry, shall all the sons of Aaron have, one as much as another.

Observe here, 1. Concerning the trespass-offering; that being much of the same nature with the sin-offering, it was to be governed by the same rules, *ver.* 6. when the blood and fat were offered to God to make atonement, the priests were to eat the flesh, as that of the sin-offering, in the holy place. The Jews have a tradition (as we have it from the learned bishop Patrick) concerning the sprinkling of the blood of the trespass-offering round about the altar, that there was a scarlet line which went round about the altar exactly in the middle, and the blood of the burnt-offerings was sprinkled round about above the line, but that of the trespass-offerings and peace-offerings round about below the line. As to the flesh of the trespass-offering, the right to it belonged to the priest that offered it, *ver.* 7. He that did the work must have the wages: this was an encouragement to the priests, to give diligent attendance on the altar; the more ready and busy they were, the more they got. Note, The more diligent we are in the services of religion, the more we shall reap of the advantages of it. But any of the priests, and the males of their families, might be invited by him to whom it belonged to partake with him, *ver.* 6. Every male among the priests shall eat thereof, i. e. may eat thereof, in the holy place. And no doubt it was the usage to treat one another with those perquisites of their office, by which friendship and fellowship was kept up among the priests. Freely they had received, and must freely give. It seems the offerer was not himself to have any share of his trespass-offering, as he was to have of his peace-offering; but it was all divided between the altar and the priest. They offered peace-offerings in thankfulness for mercy, and then it was proper to feast; but they offered trespass-offerings in sorrow for sin, and then fasting was more proper, in token of holy mourning, and a resolution to abstain from sin.

2. Concerning the burnt-offering; it is here appointed that the priest that offered it shall have the skin, *ver.* 8. which no doubt he might make money of. This (the Jews say) is meant only of the burnt-offerings which were offered by particular persons; for the profit of the skins of the daily burnt-offerings for the congregation, went to the repair of the sanctuary. Some suggest, that this appointment will help us to understand God's clothing our first parents with coats of skins, Gen. iii. 21. The beasts, whose skins they were, it is probable were offered in sacrifice as whole burnt-offerings, and that Adam was the priest that offered them; and then God gave him the skins, as his fee, to make cloths of for himself and his wife; in remembrance of which, the skins ever after pertained to the priest; and see Gen. xxvii. 16.

3. Concerning the meat-offering: If it was dressed, it was fit to be eaten presently; and therefore the priest that offered it was to have it, *ver.* 9. If it was dry, there was not so much haste of

using it, and therefore an equal dividend of it must be made among all the priests, that were then in waiting, *ver.* 10.

11. And this is the law of the sacrifice of the peace-offerings, which he shall offer unto the LORD. 12. If he offer it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer with the sacrifice of thanksgiving, unleavened cakes mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and cakes mingled with oil, of fine flour, fried. 13. Besides the cakes, he shall offer for his offering, leavened bread, with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace-offerings. 14. And of it he shall offer one out of the whole oblation, for an heave-offering unto the LORD, and it shall be the priests that sprinkleth the blood of the peace-offerings. 15. And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace-offerings for thanksgiving, shall be eaten the same day that it is offered: he shall not leave any of it until the morning. 16. But if the sacrifice of his offering be a vow, or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offereth his sacrifice: and on the morrow also the remainder of it shall be eaten. 17. But the remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day, shall be burnt with fire. 18. And if any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace-offerings be eaten at all on the third day, it shall not be accepted, neither shall it be imputed unto him that offereth it: it shall be an abomination, and the soul that eateth of it, shall bear his iniquity. 19. And the flesh that toucheth any unclean thing, shall not be eaten, it shall be burnt with fire: and as for the flesh, all that be clean shall eat thereof. 20. But the soul that eateth of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace-offerings, that pertain unto the LORD, having his uncleanness upon him, even that soul shall be cut off from his people. 21. Moreover, the soul that shall touch any unclean thing, as the uncleanness of man, or any unclean beast, or any abominable unclean thing, and eat of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace-offerings which pertain unto the LORD, even that soul shall be cut off from his people. 22. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 23. Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Ye shall eat no manner of fat, of ox, or of sheep, or of goat. 24. And the fat of the beast that dieth of it self, and the fat of that which is torn with beasts, may be used in any other use; but ye shall in no wise eat of it. 25. For whosoever eateth the fat of the beast, of which men offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD, even the soul that eateth it, shall be cut off from his people. 26. Moreover, ye shall eat no manner of blood, whether it be of fowl, or of beast, in any of your dwellings. 27. Whatsoever soul it be that eateth any manner of blood, even that soul shall be cut off from his people. 28. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 29. Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, He that offereth the sacrifice of his peace-offerings unto the LORD, shall bring his oblation unto the LORD, of the sacrifice of his peace-offerings. 30. His own hands shall bring the offerings of the LORD, made by fire, the fat with the breast, it shall he bring, that the breast may be waved, for a wave-offering before the LORD. 31. And the priest shall burn the fat upon the altar: but the breast shall be Aarons and his sons. 32. And the right shoulder shall ye give unto the priest for an heave-offering, of the sacrifices of your peace-offerings. 33. He among the sons of Aaron that offereth the blood of the peace-offerings, and the fat, shall have the right shoulder for his part. 34. For the wave-breast and the heave-shoulder have I taken of the children of Israel, from off the sacrifices of their peace-offerings, and have given them unto Aaron the priest, and unto his sons, by a statute for ever, from among the children of Israel.

All this relates to the peace-offerings; it is the repetition and explication of what we had before, with divers additions. 1. The nature and intention of the peace-offerings is here more distinctly opened. They were offered, either (1.) in thankfulness for some special mercy received, such as recovery from sickness, preservation in a journey, deliverance at sea, redemption out of captivity, all which are instanced in *Psal.* cvii. and for them men are called upon to offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, *ver.* 22. Or, (2.) in performance of some vow, which a man made when he was in distress, *ver.* 16. and this was less honourable than the former, though the omission of it would have been more culpable. Or, (3.) in supplication for some special mercy, which a man was in the pursuit and expectation of, here called a voluntary offering: This

This accompanied a man's prayers, as the former did his praises. We do not find that men were bound by the law, unless they had bound themselves by vow, to offer these peace-offerings, upon such occasions, as they were to bring their sacrifices of atonement, in case of sin committed: Not but that prayer and praise are as much our duty as repentance is; but here in the expressions of their sense of mercy God left them more to their liberty, than in the expressions of their sense of sin, to try the generosity of their devotion; and that their sacrifices being free-will offerings, they might be the more laudable and acceptable; and by obliging them to bring the sacrifices of atonement, God would shew the necessity of the great propitiation.

2. The rites and ceremonies about it are enlarged upon. (1.) If it were offered for a thanksgiving, a meat-offering must be offered with it, cakes of several sorts, and wafers, *ver. 12.* and (which was peculiar to the peace-offerings) leavened bread must be offered, not to be burnt upon the altar, that was forbidden, *chap. ii. 11.* but to be eaten with the flesh of the sacrifice, that nothing might be wanting to make it a compleat and pleasant feast; for unleavened bread was less grateful to the taste; and therefore though enjoined in the passover, for a particular reason, yet in other festivals leavened bread, which was lighter and more pleasant, was appointed, that men might feast at God's table, as well as at their own. And some think, that a meat-offering is required to be brought with every peace-offering, as well as with that of thanksgiving, by that law here, *ver. 29.* which requires an oblation with it, that the table might be as well furnished as the altar. (2.) The flesh of the peace-offerings, both that which was the priest's share, and that which was the offerer's, must be eaten quickly, and not kept long, either raw, or dressed cold. If it were a peace-offering for thanksgiving, it must be all eaten the same day, *ver. 15.* If a vow or a voluntary offering, it must be eaten either the same day, or the day after, *ver. 16.* If any were left beyond the time limited, it was to be burnt, *ver. 17.* And if any person eat of it, it should be animadverted upon as a very high misdemeanor, *ver. 18.* Though they were not obliged to eat it in the holy place, as those offerings that are called *most holy*, but might take it to their own tents, and feast upon it there, yet God would by this law make them to know a difference between that and other meat, and religiously to observe it; that whereas they might keep other meat cold in the house as long as they thought fit, and warm it again if they pleased, and eat it three or four days after, they might not do so with the flesh of their peace-offerings; that must be eaten presently.

1. Because God would not have that holy flesh to be in danger of putrefying, or being fly-blown; to prevent which it must be salted with fire, (as the expression is, *Mark ix. 49.*) if it were kept; as, if it was used, it must be salted with salt. 2. Because God would not have his people to be niggardly, and sparing, and distrustful of providence, but cheerfully to enjoy what God gives them, *Ecc. viii. 15.* and to do good with it, and not to be anxiously solicitous for the morrow. 3. The flesh of the peace-offerings was God's treat, and therefore God would have the disposal of it; and he orders it to be used generously for the entertainment of their friends, and charitably for the relief of the poor; to shew that he is a bountiful benefactor, *gives us all things richly to enjoy*, the bread of the day in its day. If the sacrifice were a thanksgiving, they were especially obliged thus to testify their holy joy in God's goodness by their holy feasting. This law is made very strict, *ver. 18.* that if the offerer did not take care to have all his offering eaten by himself, or his family, his friends, or the poor, within the time limited by the law, and if there were any left, to burn it, (which was the most decent way of disposing of it, the sacrifices upon the altar being consumed by fire) then his offering should not be accepted, nor imputed to him. Note, All the benefit of our religious services is lost, if we do not improve them, and manage our selves aright afterwards. They are not acceptable to God, if they have not a due influence upon our selves. If a man seemed generous in bringing a peace-offering, and yet afterwards proved sneaking and paltry in the using of it, it was as if he had never brought it; nay, *it shall be an abomination*. Note, There is no mean between God's acceptance and his abhorrence. If our persons and performances be sincere and upright, they are accepted; if not, they are an abomination, *Prov. xv. 8.* He that eats it after the time appointed shall *bear his iniquity*, i. e. he shall be cut off from his people, as it is explained *chap. xix. 8.* where this law is repeated. This law of eating the peace-offerings before the third day, that they might not putrify, is applicable to the resurrection of Christ after two days, that being God's holy one, he might not see corruption, *Psal. xvi. 10.* And some think it gives us an instruction, speedily and without delay to partake of Christ, and his grace; feeding and feasting thereupon by faith, to day, while it is called to day, *Heb. iii. 13, 14.* for it will be too late shortly.

3. Both the flesh, and those that eat it must be pure. (1.) The flesh must touch no unclean thing; if it did, it must not be eaten, but burnt, *ver. 19.* If in carrying it from the altar to the place where it was eaten, suppose a dog touched it, or it

touched a dead body, or any other unclean thing, it was then unfit to be used in a religious feast. Every thing we honour the holy God with must be pure, and carefully kept from all pollution. It is a case adjudged, *Hag. ii. 12.* that the holy flesh could not by its touch communicate holiness to what was common; but by this law it is determined, that by the touch of that which was unclean, it received pollution from it; which intimates, that the infection of sin is more easily and more frequently communicated, than the savour of grace. (2.) It must not be eaten by any unclean person. He that was upon any account ceremonially unclean, it was at his peril if he presumed to eat of the flesh of the peace-offerings, *ver. 20, 21.* Holy things are only for holy persons; the holiness of the food being ceremonial, those were incapacitated to partake of it, who lay under any ceremonial uncleanness; but we are hereby taught to preserve our selves pure from all the pollutions of sin, that we may have the benefit and comfort of Christ's sacrifice, *1 Pet. ii. 1, 2.* Our consciences must be purged from dead works, that we may be fit to serve the living God, *Heb. ix. 14.* But if any dare to partake of the table of the Lord, under the pollution of sin unrepented of, and so profane sacred things, they eat and drink judgment to themselves, as those did that eat of the peace-offerings in their uncleanness, *1 Cor. xi. 29.* A good reason for the strictness of this law, is intimated in the description given of the peace-offerings, *ver. 20.* and again, *ver. 21.* that they pertain unto the Lord: whatever pertains to the Lord is sacred, and must be used with great reverence, and not with unhallowed hands. Be ye holy, for God is holy, and ye pertain to him.

4. The eating of blood and the fat of the inwards is here again prohibited; and the prohibition is annexed as before to the law of the peace-offerings, *chap. iii. 17.*

(1.) The prohibition of the fat seems to be confined only to those beasts which were used for sacrifice, the beeves, sheep, and goats: but of the roe-buck and of the hart, and other clean beasts, they might eat the fat; for those only of which offerings were brought are mentioned here, *ver. 23, and 25.* This was to preserve in their minds a reverence for God's altar, on which the fat of the inwards was burned. The Jews say, If a man do eat so much as an olive of forbidden fat, if he do it presumptuously, he is in danger to be cut off by the hand of God; if ignorantly, he is to bring a sin-offering, and so to pay dear for his carelessness. To eat of the flesh of that which died of it self, or was torn of beasts was unlawful, but to eat of the fat of such was doubly unlawful, *ver. 24.*

(2.) The prohibition of blood is more general, *ver. 26, 27.* because the fat was offered to God only by way of acknowledgment; but the blood made atonement for the soul, and so typified Christ's sacrifice, much more than the burning of the fat did; to this therefore a greater reverence must be paid, till these types had their accomplishment in the offering up of the body of Christ once for all. The Jews rightly expound this law, as forbidding only the blood of the life, as they express it, not that which we call the gravy, for of that they supposed it was lawful to eat.

5. The priest's share of the peace-offerings is here cut out for himself; out of every beast that was offered for a peace-offering, the priest that offered it was to have to himself the breast and the right shoulder, *ver. 30—34.* Observe here, (1.) That when the sacrifice was killed, the offerer himself must, with his own hands, present God's part of it, that he might signify thereby his cheerful giving it up to God, and his desire that it might be accepted. He was with his own hands to lift it up, in token of his regard to God as the God of heaven; and then to wave it to and fro, in token of his regard to God, as the Lord of the whole Earth; to whom thus, as far as he could reach, he offered it, shewing his good-will to do him honour. Now that which was thus heaved and waved was the fat, and the breast, and the right shoulder, it was all offered to God; and then he ordered the fat to his altar, and the breast and shoulder to his priest, both being his receivers. (2.) That when the fat was burned the priest took his part, on which he and his family were to feast, as well as the offerer and his family. In holy joy and thanksgiving, it is good to have our ministers to go before us, and to be our mouth to God. The melody is then sweet, when he that sows and they that reap rejoice together. Some observe a significancy in the parts assigned to the priests: the breast and the shoulder intimate the affections and the actions, which must be devoted to the honour of God by all his people, and to the service also of the church by all his priests. Christ, our great peace-offering, feasts all his spiritual priests with the breast and shoulder, with the dearest love, and the sweetest and strongest supports; for he is the wisdom of God, and the power of God. When Saul was designed for a king, Samuel ordered the shoulder of the peace-offering to be set before him, *1 Sam. ix. 24.* which gave him a hint of something great and sacred intended him. Jesus Christ is our great peace-offering; for he made himself a sacrifice, not only to atone for sin, and so to save us from the curse, but to purchase a blessing for us, and all good. By our joyful partaking of the benefits of redemption, we feast upon the sacrifice; to signify which the Lord's supper was instituted.

35. This is the portion of the anointing of Aaron, and of the anointing of his sons; out of the offerings of the LORD made by fire, in the day when he presented them to minister unto the LORD in the priests office: 36. Which the LORD commanded to be given them of the children of Israel, in the day that he anointed them, by a statute for ever, throughout their generations. 37. This is the law of the burnt-offering, of the meat-offering, and of the sin-offering, and of the trespass-offering, and of the consecrations, and of the sacrifice of the peace-offerings: 38. Which the LORD commanded Moses in mount Sinai, in the day that he commanded the children of Israel to offer their oblations unto the LORD, in the wilderness of Sinai.

Here is the conclusion of these laws concerning the sacrifices, though some of them are afterwards repeated and explained. They are to be considered, 1. As a grant to the priests, *ver. 35, 36.* In the day they were ordained to that work and office, this provision was made for their comfortable maintenance. Note, God will take care that those that are employed for him be well paid, and well provided for. They that receive the anointing of the Spirit to minister unto the Lord, shall have their portion, and it shall be a worthy portion, out of the offerings of the Lord: for God's work is its own wages, and there is a present reward of obedience in obedience. 2. As a statute for ever to the people, that they should bring these offerings, according to the rules prescribed, and cheerfully give the priests their share out of them. God commanded the children of Israel to offer their oblations, *ver. 38.* Note, The solemn acts of religious worship are commanded. They are not things that we are left to our liberty in, and which we may do or not do at our pleasure; but we are under indispensable obligations to perform them in their season; and it is at our peril if we omit them. The observance of the laws of Christ, cannot be less necessary than the observance of the laws of Moses was.

C H A P. VIII.

This chapter gives us an account of the solemn consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priest's office. 1. It was done publicly, and the congregation was called together to be witnesses of it, ver. 1—4. 2. It was done exactly according to God's appointment, ver. 5. (1.) They were washed and dressed, ver. 1—9, 13. (2.) The tabernacle and the utensils of it were anointed, and then the priests, ver. 10—12. (3.) A sin-offering was offered for them, ver. 14—17. (4.) A burnt-offering, ver. 18—21. (5.) The ram of consecration, ver. 22—30. (6.) The continuance of this solemnity for seven days, ver. 31—36.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and a bullock for the sin-offering, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread. 3. And gather thou all the congregation together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 4. And Moses did as the LORD commanded him, and the assembly was gathered together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 5. And Moses said unto the congregation, This is the thing which the LORD commanded to be done. 6. And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water. 7. And he put upon him the coat, and girded him with the girdle, and clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod upon him, and he girded him with the curious girdle of the ephod, and bound it unto him therewith. 8. And he put the breast-plate upon him: also he put in the breast-plate the Urim and Thummim. 9. And he put the mitre upon his head: also upon the mitre, even upon his fore-front did he put the golden plate, the holy crown, as the LORD commanded Moses. 10. And Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle, and all that was therein, and sanctified them. 11. And he sprinkled thereof upon the altar seven times, and anointed the altar, and all his vessels, both the laver and his foot, to sanctify them. 12. And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aarons head, and anointed him to sanctify him. 13. And Moses brought Aarons sons, and put coats upon them, and girded them with girdles, and put bonnets upon them, as the LORD commanded Moses.

God had given Moses orders to consecrate Aaron and his sons to the priests office, when he was with him the first time upon mount Sinai, *Exod. xxviii, and xxix.* where we have also the

particular instructions he had how to do it. Now here we have,

1. The orders repeated; what was there commanded to be done, is here commanded to be done *now*, *ver. 2, 3.* The tabernacle was newly set up, which, without the priests, would be as a candlestick without a candle; the law concerning sacrifices was newly given, but could not be observed without priests; for though Aaron and his sons had been nominated to the office, they could not officiate till they were consecrated; which yet must not be done, till the place of their ministration was prepared, and the ordinances instituted, that they might apply themselves to work as soon as ever they were consecrated, and might know they were not ordained only to the honour and profit, but to the business of the priesthood. Aaron and his sons were near relations to Moses, and therefore he would not consecrate them till he had further orders, lest he should seem too forward to bring honour into his family.

2. The congregation called together, *at the door*, i. e. in the court of the tabernacle, *ver. 4.* The elders and principal men of the congregation, who represented the body of the people, were summoned to attend; for the court would hold but a few of the many thousands of Israel. It was done thus publicly, (1.) Because it was a solemn transaction between God and Israel; the priests were to be ordained for men in things pertaining to God, for the maintaining of a settled correspondence, and the negotiating of all affairs between the people and God, and therefore it was fit both sides should appear to own the appointment at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. (2.) The spectators of the solemnity could not but be possessed by the sight of it with a great veneration for the priests, and their office, which was necessary among a people so wretchedly prone as they were to envy and discontent. It was strange that any of those who were witnesses of what was here done, should afterwards say, as some of them did, *Ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi:* but what would they have said if it had been done clandestinely? Note, It is very fit, and of good use, that ministers should be ordained publicly, *plebs presente*, according to the usage of the primitive church.

3. The commission read, *ver. 5.* Moses, who was God's representative in this solemnity, produced his orders before the congregation, *This is the thing which the Lord commanded to be done.* Though God had crowned him king in Jeshurun, when he made his face to shine in the sight of all Israel; yet he did not institute or appoint any thing in God's worship, but what God himself had commanded. The priesthood he delivered to them, was that which he had received from the Lord. Note, All that minister about holy things, must have an eye to God's command, as their rule and warrant; for it is only in the observance of that that they can expect to be owned and accepted of God. Thus we must be able to say in all acts of religious worship, *This is the thing which the Lord commanded to be done.*

4. The ceremony performed according to the divine ritual. (1.) Aaron and his sons were washed with water, *ver. 6.* to signify that they ought now to purify themselves from all sinful dispositions and inclinations, and ever after to keep themselves pure. Christ washeth those from their sins in his own blood, whom he makes to our God kings and priests, *Rev. i. 5, 6.* and those that draw near to God must be washed in pure water, *Heb. x. 22.* Though they were never so clean before, and no filth was to be seen upon them, yet they must be washed, to signify their purification from sin, with which their souls were polluted, how clean soever their bodies were.

(2.) They were clothed with the holy garments; Aaron with his, *ver. 7, 8, 9.* which typified the dignity of Christ our great high priest; and his sons with theirs, *ver. 12.* which typified the decency of christians, who are spiritual priests. Christ wears the breast-plate of judgment, and the holy crown; for the church's high priest is her prophet and king: All believers are clothed with the robe of righteousness, girt with the girdle of truth, resolution, and close application, and their heads bound, as the word here is, with the bonnet or diadem of beauty, the beauty of holiness.

(3.) The high priest was anointed, and it should seem the holy things were anointed at the same time; some think that was done before, but is mentioned here, because Aaron was anointed with the same oil that they were: but the manner of relating it here makes it more probable that it was done at the same time, and that the seven days of the consecrating of the altar were coincident with the seven days of the priests consecration. The tabernacle, and all its utensils, had some of the anointing oil put upon them with Moses's finger, *ver. 10.* so had the altar, *ver. 11.* these were to sanctify the gold and the gift, *Matt. xxiii. 17, 19.* and therefore must themselves be thus sanctified; but he poured it out more plentifully upon the head of Aaron, *ver. 12.* so that it ran down to the skirts of his garments, because his unction was to typify the anointing of Christ with the Spirit, which was not given by measure to him. Yet all believers also have received the anointing, which puts an indelible character upon them, *1 John ii. 27.*

14. And he brought the bullock for the sin-offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the bullock for the sin-offering. 15. And he slew it, and Moses

Moses took the blood, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about with his finger, and purified the altar; and poured the blood at the bottom of the altar, and sanctified it, to make reconciliation upon it. 16. And he took all the fat that was upon the inwards, and the caul above the liver; and the two kidneys, and their fat, and Moses burned it upon the altar. 17. But the bullock and his hide, his flesh and his dung, he burnt with fire without the camp; as the LORD commanded Moses. 18. And he brought the ram for the burnt-offering: and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram. 19. And he killed it, and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about. 20. And he cut the ram into pieces, and Moses burnt the head, and the pieces, and the fat. 21. And he washed the inwards and the legs in water; and Moses burnt the whole ram upon the altar: it was a burnt-sacrifice for a sweet favour, and an offering made by fire unto the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moses. 22. And he brought the other ram, the ram of consecration: and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram. 23. And he slew it, and Moses took of the blood of it, and put it upon the tip of Aarons right ear, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot. 24. And he brought Aarons sons, and Moses put of the blood upon the tip of their right ear, and upon the thumbs of their right hands, and upon the great toes of their right feet: and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about. 25. And he took the fat, and the rump, and all the fat that was upon the inwards, and the caul above the liver, and the two kidneys, and their fat, and the right shoulder. 26. And out of the basket of unleavened bread, that was before the LORD, he took one unleavened cake, and a cake of oiled bread, and one wafer, and put them on the fat, and upon the right shoulder. 27. And he put all upon Aarons hands, and upon his sons hands, and waved them for a wave-offering before the LORD. 28. And Moses took them from off their hands, and burnt them on the altar upon the burnt-offering; they were consecrations for a sweet favour: it is an offering made by fire unto the LORD. 29. And Moses took the breast and waved it for a wave-offering before the LORD: for of the ram of consecration it was Moses part; as the LORD commanded Moses. 30. And Moses took of the anointing oil, and of the blood which was upon the altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons garments with him, and sanctified Aaron, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons garments with him.

The covenant of priesthood must be made by sacrifice, as well as other covenants, *Psal. i. 5.* And thus Christ was consecrated by the *sacrifice of himself*, once for all. Sacrifices of each kind must be offered for the priests, that they might with the more tenderness and concern offer the gifts and sacrifices of the people, with compassion on the ignorant, and on *them that were out of the way*, not insulting over those for whom sacrifices were offered, remembering that they themselves had had sacrifices offered for them; being *compassed with infirmity*.

1. A bullock, the largest sacrifice, was offered for a sin-offering, *ver. 14.* that hereby atonement might be made, and they might not bring any of the guilt of the sins of their former state, into the new character they were now to put on. When Isaiah was sent to be a prophet, he was told to his comfort, *Thine iniquity is taken away*, *Isa. vi. 7.* Ministers that are to declare the remission of sins to others, should give diligence to get it made sure to themselves in the first place, that their own sins are pardoned. Those to whom is *committed the ministry of reconciliation*, must first be reconciled to God themselves, that they may deal for the souls of others as for their own.

2. A ram was offered for a burnt-offering, *ver. 18—21.* By this they gave to God the glory of this great honour, which was now put upon them, and returned him praise for it, as Paul thanked Christ Jesus for *putting him into the ministry*, *1 Tim. i. 13.* They also signified the devoting of themselves and all their services to the honour of God.

3. Another ram, called the *ram of consecration*, was offered for a peace-offering, *ver. 22, &c.* The blood of it was part put on the priests, on their ears, thumbs, and toes, and part sprinkled upon the altar; and thus he did (as it were) marry them to the altar; which they must all their days give attendance upon. All the ceremonies about this offering, as those before, were appointed by the express command of God; and if we compare this chapter

No. VIII.

with *Exod. xxix.* we shall find that the performance of the solemnity exactly agrees with the precept there, and in nothing varies. Here therefore, as in the account we had of the tabernacle and its vessels, it is again and again repeated, *As the Lord commanded Moses:* And thus Christ, when he sanctified himself with his own blood, had an eye to his Father's will in it, *as the Father gave me commandment, so I do*, *Joh. xiv. 31. x. 18. vi. 38.*

31. And Moses said unto Aaron, and to his sons, Boil the flesh at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and there eat it with the bread that is in the basket of consecrations, as I commanded, saying, Aaron and his sons shall eat it. 32. And that which remaineth of the flesh and of the bread, shall ye burn with fire. 33. And ye shall not go out of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation in seven days, until the days of your consecration be at an end: for seven days shall he consecrate you. 34. As he hath done this day, so the LORD hath commanded to do, to make an atonement for you. 35. Therefore shall ye abide at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, day and night, seven days, and keep the charge of the LORD, that ye die not, for so I am commanded. 36. So Aaron and his sons did all things which the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.

Moses having done his part of the ceremony, he now leaves Aaron and his sons to do theirs. 1. They must boil the flesh of their peace-offering, and eat it in the court of the tabernacle, and what remained they must burn with fire, *ver. 31, 32.* This signified their thankful consent to the consecration: When God gave Ezekiel his commission, he bid him eat the roll, *Ezek. iii. 1, 2.* 2. They must not stir out of the court of the tabernacle for seven days, *ver. 33.* The priesthood being a good warfare, they must thus learn to endure hardness, and to disengage themselves from the affairs of this life, *2 Tim. ii. 3, 4.* Being consecrated to their service, they must *give themselves wholly to it, and attend continually to this very thing.* Though Christ's apostles were appointed to *wait for the promise of the Father*, *Acts i. 4.* During this time appointed for their consecration, they were daily to repeat the same sacrifices which were offered the first day, *ver. 34.* This shews the imperfection of the legal sacrifices, which because they could not take away sin, were oft repeated, *Heb. x. 1, 2.* but were here repeated seven times, (a number of perfection) because they typified that *one offering, which perfected for ever them that were sanctified.* The work lasted seven days; for it was a kind of creation; and this time was appointed in honour of the sabbath, which probably was the last day of the seven; for which they were to prepare during the six days. Thus the time of our life, like the six days, must be our preparation for the perfection of our consecration to God in the everlasting sabbath: they attended *day and night*, *ver. 35.* and so constant should we be in our meditation on God's law, *Psal. i. 1.* They attended to *keep the charge of the Lord:* we have every one of us a charge to keep, an eternal God to glorify, an immortal soul to provide for, needful duty to be done, our generation to serve; and it must be our daily care to keep this charge, for it is the charge of the Lord our master, who will shortly call us to an account about it, and it is at our utmost peril if we neglect it. Keep it *that ye die not;* it is death, eternal death, to betray the trust we are charged with; by the consideration of this we must be kept in awe. Lastly, We are told, *ver. 36.* that *Aaron and his sons did all that was commanded.* Thus their consecration was compleated; and thus they set an example before the people, of an exact obedience to the laws of sacrifices now newly given, and then they could with the better grace teach them.

Thus the *covenant of peace*, *Numb. xxv. 12.* of *life and peace*, *Mal. ii. 5.* was made with Aaron and his sons; but after all the ceremonies that were used in their consecration, there was one point of ratification which was reserved to be the honour and establishment of Christ's priesthood, which was this, that they were *made priests without an oath, but Christ with an oath*, *Heb. vii. 21.* for neither such priests nor their priesthood could continue, but Christ's is a perpetual and unchangeable priesthood.

Gospel ministers are compared to them who served at the altar, for they *minister about holy things*, *1 Cor. ix. 13.* they are God's mouth to the people, and the people's to God, the pastors and teachers Christ has appointed to continue in the church to the end of the world: they seem to be meant in that promise which points at gospel times, *Isa. lxvi. 21.* *I will take of them for priests and for Levites.* No man may take this honour to himself, but he who upon trial is found to be clothed and anointed by the Spirit of God with gifts and graces to qualify him for it; and who with purpose of heart devotes himself intirely to the service; and is then by the *word and prayer*, (for so every thing is sanctified) and the imposition of the hands of those that *give themselves to the word and prayer*, set apart to the office, and recommended to Christ as a servant, and to the church as a steward and guide. And they that are thus solemnly dedicated to God, ought not to depart from his service, but faithfully to abide in it all their days; and

and they that do so, and continue labouring in the word and doctrine, are to be accounted worthy of double honour, double to that of the Old Testament priests.

C H A P. IX.

Aaron and his sons having been solemnly consecrated to the priesthood, are in this chapter entering upon the execution of their office, the very next day after their consecration was completed. 1. Moses (no doubt by direction from God) appoints a meeting between God and his priests, as the representatives of his people, ordering them to attend him, and assuring them that he would appear to them, ver. 1—7. 2. The meeting holds according to the appointment. (1.) Aaron attends on God by sacrifice, offering a sin-offering and a burnt-offering for himself, ver. 8—14. and then the offerings for the people, whom he blessed in the name of the Lord, ver. 15—22. (2.) God signifies his acceptance, 1. Of their persons, by shewing them his glory, ver. 23. 2. Of their sacrifices, by consuming them with fire from heaven, ver. 24.

1. **A**ND it came to pass on the eighth day, that Moses called Aaron and his sons, and the elders of Israel: 2. And he said unto Aaron, Take thee a young calf for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering, without blemish, and offer them before the LORD. 3. And unto the children of Israel thou shalt speak, saying, Take ye a kid of the goats for a sin-offering, and a calf, and a lamb, both of the first-year, without blemish, for a burnt-offering. 4. Also a bullock and a ram, for peace-offerings, to sacrifice before the LORD; and a meat-offering mingled with oil: for to day the LORD will appear unto you. 5. And they brought that which Moses commanded before the tabernacle of the congregation: and all the congregation drew near and stood before the LORD. 6. And Moses said, This is the thing which the LORD commanded that ye should do: and the glory of the LORD shall appear unto you. 7. And Moses said unto Aaron, Go unto the altar, and offer thy sin-offering, and thy burnt-offering, and make an atonement for thy self, and for the people: and offer the offering of the people, and make an atonement for them; as the LORD commanded.

Orders are here given for another solemnity upon the eighth day; for the new ordained priests were set to work immediately, after the days of their consecration were finished, to let them know, that they were not ordained to be idle: *He that desires the office of a bishop, desires a good work, which must be looked at with desire, more than the honour and benefit.* The priests had not so much as one day's respite from service allowed them, that they might divert themselves, and receive the compliments of their friends upon their elevation, but were busily employed the very next day after; for their consecration was the filling of their hands. God's spiritual priests have constant work cut out for them, which the duty of every day requires; and they that would give up their account with joy must redeem time; see *Ezek. xliii. 26.*

Now, 1. Moses raiseth their expectation of a glorious appearance of God to them this day; ver. 4. *To day the Lord will appear to you, that are the priests.* And when all the congregation are gathered together, and stand before the Lord, he tells them, ver. 6. *The glory of the Lord shall appear to you.* Though they had reason enough to believe God's acceptance of all that which they had done according to his appointment, upon the general assurance we have that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, though he had not given them any sensible token of it; yet that if possible they and theirs might be effectually obliged to the service and worship of God, and might never turn aside to idols, the glory of God appeared to them, and visibly owned what they had done. We are not now to expect such appearances; we Christians walk more by faith, and less by sight, than they did: But we may be sure that God doth draw nigh to those who draw nigh to him, and that the offerings of faith are really acceptable to him; though the sacrifices being spiritual, the tokens of the acceptance are, as it is fit they should be, spiritual likewise. To them who are duly consecrated to God, he will undoubtedly manifest himself.

2. He put both priests and people upon preparing to receive this favour God designed them. *Aaron and his sons, and the elders of Israel, are all summoned to attend, ver. 1.* Note, God will manifest himself in the solemn assemblies of his people and ministers; and those that would have the benefit and comfort of God's appearances, must in them give their attendance.

(1.) Aaron is ordered to prepare his offerings; ver. 2. *A young calf for a sin-offering.* The Jewish writers suggest, that therefore a calf was appointed for his sin-offering, to mind him of his sin in making the golden calf; by which he had rendered himself for ever unworthy of the honour of the priesthood, and which he had reason to reflect upon with sorrow and shame, in all the atonements he made.

(2.) Aaron must direct the people to get theirs ready. Hitherto Moses had told the people what they must do; but now Aaron, as high priest over the house of God, must be their teacher, in things pertaining to God; ver. 3. *Unto the children of Israel thou shalt speak:* Now he was to speak from them to God in the sacrifices (the language of which, he that appointed them, very well understood) he must speak from God to them in the laws about the sacrifices. Thus Moses would engage the people's respect and obedience to him, as one that was set over them in the Lord, to administer them.

(3.) Aaron must offer his own first, and then the people's, ver. 7. Aaron must now go to the altar, Moses having shewed him the way to it; and there, 1. He must make an atonement for himself; for the high priest being compassed with infirmity, ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins, Heb. v. 2, 3. and for himself first; for how can we expect to be accepted in our prayers for others, if we our selves be not reconciled to God? Nor is any service pleasing to God, till the guilt of sin be removed by our interest in the great propitiation. Those that have the care of the souls of others, are also hereby taught to look to their own in the first place; this charity must begin at home, though it must not end there. It is the charge to Timothy, to take care to save himself first, and then those that heard him, 1 Tim. iv. 16. The high priest made atonement for himself, as one that was joined with sinners; but we have a high priest that was separated from sinners, and needed it not: when Messiah the prince was cut off as a sacrifice, it was not for himself; for he knew no sin. 2. He must make an atonement for the people, by offering their sacrifices. Now he was made a high priest, he must lay to heart the concerns of the people, and this as their great concern, their reconciliation to God, and the putting away of sin which had separated between them and God. He must make atonement as the Lord commanded. See here the wonderful condescension of the mercy of God, that he not only allows an atonement to be made, but commands it; not only admits, but requires us to be reconciled to him. No room therefore is left to doubt, but that the atonement which is commanded, will be accepted.

8. Aaron therefore went unto the altar, and slew the calf of the sin-offering, which was for himself. 9. And the sons of Aaron brought the blood unto him: and he dipt his finger in the blood, and put it upon the horns of the altar, and poured out the blood at the bottom of the altar. 10. But the fat, and the kidneys, and the caul above the liver of the sin-offering he burnt upon the altar; as the LORD commanded Moses. 11. And the flesh and the hide he burnt with fire without the camp. 12. And he slew the burnt-offering, and Aarons sons presented unto him the blood, which he sprinkled round about upon the altar. 13. And they presented the burnt-offering unto him, with the pieces thereof, and the head, and he burnt them upon the altar. 14. And he did wash the inwards, and the legs, and burnt them upon the burnt-offering on the altar. 15. And he brought the peoples offering, and took the goat which was the sin-offering for the people, and slew it, and offered it for sin, as the first. 16. And he brought the burnt-offering, and offered it according to the manner. 17. And he brought the meat-offering, and took an handful thereof, and burnt it upon the altar, beside the burnt-sacrifice of the morning. 18. He slew also the bullock and the ram, for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, which was for the people: and Aarons sons presented unto him the blood (which he sprinkled upon the altar round about) 19. And the fat of the bullock, and of the ram, the rump, and that which covereth the inwards, and the kidneys, and the caul above the liver. 20. And they put the fat upon the breasts, and he burnt the fat upon the altar. 21. And the breasts and the right shoulder Aaron waved for a wave-offering, before the LORD; as Moses commanded. 22. And Aaron lift up his hand towards the people, and blessed them: and came down from offering of the sin-offering, and the burnt-offering, and peace-offerings.

These being the first offerings that ever were offered by the Levitical priesthood, according to the new enacted law of sacrifices, the manner of offering them is particularly related, that it might appear how exactly they agreed with the institution. 1. Aaron with his own hands slew the offering, ver. 8. and did the work of the inferior priests; for as great as he was, he must not think any service below him, which he could do for the honour of God: And as Moses had shewed him how to do this work decently and dexterously, so he shewed his sons, that they might do likewise; for that is the best way of teaching; and thus parents should instruct their children by example. Therefore as Moses before, so Aaron now, offered some of each of the several sorts of sacrifices that

that were appointed, whose rites differed, that they might be *thoroughly furnished for every good work*. 2. He offered these *beside the burnt-sacrifice of the morning*, which was every day offered first, *ver. 17*. Note, Our accustomed devotions morning and evening alone, and in our families, must not be omitted upon any pretence whatsoever, no not when extraordinary services are to be performed; whatever is added, those must not be diminished. 3. It is not clear, whether, when it is said he burnt such and such parts of the sacrifices upon the altar, *ver. 10, 14, 17, 20*. the meaning is, that he burnt them immediately with ordinary fire, as formerly, or that he laid them upon the altar ready to be burnt with the fire from heaven which they expected, *ver. 24*. Or, whether, as bishop Patrick thinks, he burnt the offerings for himself with ordinary fire, but that when they were burnt out, he laid the peoples sacrifices upon the altar, which were kindled and consumed by the fire of the Lord. I would rather conjecture, because it is said of all these sacrifices, that he burnt them, (except the burnt-offering for the people, of which yet it is said, that he offered it *according to the manner*, *ver. 16*. which seems to be equivalent) that he did not kindle the fire to burn them, but that then the fire from the Lord fastened upon them, put out the fire that he had kindled, (as we know a greater fire puts out a lesser) and suddenly consumed the remainder, which the fire he had kindled would have consumed slowly. 4. When Aaron had done all that on his part was to be done about the sacrifices, he *lifted up his hand toward the people, and blessed them*, *ver. 22*. This was one part of the priest's work, in which he was a type of Christ, who came into the world to bless us; and when he was parted from his disciples, at his ascension, *lifted up his hands and blessed them*; and in them his whole church, of which they were the elders and representatives, as the great high priest of our profession. Aaron lifted up his hands in blessing them, to intimate, whence he desired and expected the blessing to come, even from heaven, which is God's throne; Aaron could but crave a blessing, it is God's prerogative to command it. Aaron when he had blessed came down, Christ when he blessed went up.

23. And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people, and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the people. 24. And there came a fire out from before the LORD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt-offering, and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces.

We are not told what Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle to do, *ver. 23*. Some of the Jewish writers say, they went in to pray for the appearance of the divine glory; most probably they went in that Moses might instruct Aaron how to do the service that was to be done there, burn incense, light the lamps, set the shew-bread, &c. that he might instruct his sons in it. But when they came out, they both joined in blessing the people, who stand expecting the promised appearance of the divine glory; and now it was that they had what they waited for, when Moses and Aaron concurred in praying. Note, God's manifestations of himself and his glory and grace, are commonly given in answer to prayer. When Christ was praying, the *heavens were opened*, Luke iii. 21. The glory of God appeared, not while the sacrifices were in offering, but when the priests prayed, as 2 Chron. v. 13. when they praised God; which intimates, that the prayers and praises of God's spiritual priests, are more pleasing to God, than all burnt-offerings and sacrifices.

Now when the solemnity was finished, the blessing pronounced, and the congregation ready to be dismissed, in the close of the day, then God testified his acceptance, which gave them such satisfaction as was well worth waiting for.

1. *The glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people*, *ver. 23*. What the appearance of it was we are not told; no doubt it was such as carried its own evidence along with it. That glory which filled the tabernacle, Exod. xl. 34. now shewed it self at the door of the tabernacle to those that attended there, as a prince shews himself to the expecting crowd, to gratify them. God hereby testified of their gifts, and shewed them that he was worthy for whom they should do all this. Note, Those that diligently attend upon God in the way he has appointed, shall have such a sight of his glory, as shall be abundantly to their satisfaction. They that dwell in God's house with an eye of faith, may behold the beauty of the Lord.

2. *There came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed the sacrifice*, *ver. 24*. Here the learned bishop Patrick has a very probable conjecture, that Moses and Aaron staid in the tabernacle, till it was time to offer the evening-sacrifice, which Aaron did, but it is not mentioned, because it was done of course, and that was it which the fire that came out from the Lord consumed. Whether this fire came from heaven, or out of the most holy place, or from that visible appearance of the glory of God, which all the people saw, it was a manifest token of God's acceptance of their services, as afterwards of Solomon's sacrifice, 2 Chron. vii. 1. and Elijah's, 1 Kings xviii. 36. This fire did (1.) consume, (or as the word is, eat up) the present sacrifice. And two ways this was a testimony

of acceptance. 1. It signified the turning away of God's wrath from them. God's wrath is a consuming fire; this fire might justly have fastened upon the people, and consumed them, for their sins; but its fastening upon the sacrifice, and consuming that, signified God's acceptance of that, as an atonement for the sinner. 2. It signified God's entering into covenant and communion with them: they eat their part of the sacrifice, and the fire of the Lord eat up his part; and thus he did as it were *sup with them, and they with him*, Rev. iii. 20. (2.) This fire did as it were take possession of the altar: The fire was thus kindled in God's house, which was to continue as long as the house stood, as we read before, chap. vi. 13. This also was a figure of good things to come: The Spirit descended upon the apostles in fire, Acts ii. 3. so ratifying their commission, as this here did the priests. And the descent of this holy fire into our souls, to kindle in them pious and devout affections towards God, and such a holy zeal as burns up the flesh, and the lusts of it, is a certain token of God's gracious acceptance of our persons and performances. That redounds to God's glory which is the work of his own grace in us. *Hereby we know that we dwell in God, and God in us, because he hath thus given us of his Spirit*, 1 John iv. 13. Now from henceforward, 1. All their sacrifices and incense must be offered with this fire. Note, Nothing comes to God but what comes from him. We must have grace, that holy fire, from the God of grace, else we cannot serve him acceptably, Heb. xii. 28. 2. The priests must keep it burning with constant supply of fuel, and the fuel must be wood, the cleanest of fuel: Thus those to whom God has given grace, must take heed of quenching the Spirit.

Lastly, We are here told how the people were affected with this discovery of God's glory and grace; they received it (1.) with the highest joy, they shouted; so stirring up themselves, and one another, to a holy triumph in the assurance now given them, that they had God nigh unto them; which is spoken of the grandeur of their nation, Deut. iv. 7. (2.) With the lowest reverence; they fell on their faces, humbly adoring the majesty of that God, who vouchsafed thus to manifest himself to them. That is a sinful fear of God which drives us from him, a gracious fear makes us bow before him. Very good impressions were made upon their minds for the present, but they soon wore off; as those commonly do, which are made by that which is only sensible; while the influences of faith are durable.

CHAP. X.

The story of this chapter is as sad an interruption to the institutions of the levitical law, as that of the golden calf was to the account of the erecting of the tabernacle. Here is, 1. The sin and death of Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, ver. 1, 2. 2. The quitting of Aaron under this sore affliction, ver. 3. 3. Orders given and observed about the funeral, and mourning, ver. 4—7. 4. A command to the priests not to drink wine when they went in to minister, ver. 8—11. 5. The care Moses took that they should go on with their work, notwithstanding this ruffe, ver. 12—20.

1. **A**ND Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. 2. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

Here is, 1. The great sin that Nadab and Abihu were guilty of; and a great sin we must call it, how little soever it appears in our eye; because it is evident by the punishment of it, that it was highly provoking to the God of heaven, whose judgment we are sure is according to truth. But what was their sin? All the account here given of it is, that they *offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not*, *ver. 1*. and the same, Numb. iii. 4. 1. It doth not appear that they had any orders to burn incense at all at this time. It is true, their consecration was completed the day before, and as priests it was part of their work to serve at the altar of incense; but it should seem the whole service of this solemn day of inauguration was to be performed by Aaron himself, for he *shew the sacrifices*, chap. ix. 8, 15, 18. and his sons were only to attend him, *ver. 9, 12, 18*. therefore Moses and Aaron only *went into the tabernacle*, *ver. 23*. But Nadab and Abihu were so proud of the honour they were newly advanced to, and so ambitious of doing the highest and most honourable part of their work presently, that though the service of this day was extraordinary, and all done by particular direction from Moses, yet, without receiving orders, or so much as asking leave from him, they took their censers, and they would enter into the tabernacle, at the door of which they thought they had attended long enough, and would burn incense. And then their *offering strange fire*, is the same with *offering strange incense*, which is expressly forbidden, Exod. xxx. 9. Moses we may suppose had the custody of the incense which was prepared for this purpose, Exod. xxxix. 38. and they doing this without his leave, had none of the incense which should have been offered, but common incense, so that the smoke of their incense came from a strange fire. God had indeed requir-

ed the priests to burn incense, but at this time it was what he commanded them not; and so their crime was like that of Uzziah the king, 2 Chron. xxvi. 16. The priests were to burn incense only when it was their lot, Luke i. 9. and at this time it was not theirs. 2. Presuming thus to burn incense of their own without order, no marvel that they made a further blunder, and instead of taking of the fire from the altar, which was newly kindled from before the Lord, and which from henceforward must be used in offering both sacrifice and incense, Rev. viii. 5. they took common fire, probably from that with which the flesh of the peace-offerings was boiled, and this they made use of in burning incense; not being holy fire, it is called strange fire; and though not expressly forbidden, it was crime enough that God commanded it not. For, (as bishop Hall well observes here) "It is a dangerous thing in the service of God to decline from his own institutions; we have to do with a God who is wise to prescribe his own worship, just to require what he has prescribed, and powerful to revenge what he has not prescribed." 3. Incense was always to be burned but by one priest at a time, but here they would both go in together to do it. 4. They did it rashly, and with precipitation. They snatched their censers, so some read it, in a brisk frolicsome way, without due reverence and seriousness: When all the people fell upon their faces, before the glory of the Lord, they thought the dignity of their office was such as to exempt them from such abasements. The familiarity they were admitted to, bred a contempt of the divine Majesty; and now they were priests, they thought they might do what they pleased. 5. There is reason to suspect they were drunk when they did it, because of the law which was given upon this occasion, ver. 8. They had been feasting upon the peace-offerings, and the drink-offerings that attended them, and so their heads were light, or at least their hearts were merry with wine, they drank and forgot the law, Prov. xxxi. 5. and were guilty of this fatal miscarriage. 6. No doubt it was done presumptuously; for if it had been done through ignorance, they had been allowed the benefit of the law lately made, even for the priests, that they should bring a sin-offering, chap. iv. 2, 3. But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, and in contempt of God's majesty, authority, and justice, that soul shall be cut off, Numb. xv. 30.

2. The dreadful punishment of this sin, ver. 2. *There went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them.* This fire which consumed the sacrificers, came the same way with that which had consumed the sacrifices, chap. ix. 24. which shewed what justice would have done to all the guilty people, if infinite mercy had not found and accepted a ransom; and if that fire struck such an awe upon the people, much more would this. Observe, 1. They died. Might it not have sufficed if they had been only struck with a leprosy, as Uzziah, or struck dumb, as Zechariah, and both by the altar of incense? No; they were both struck dead. The wages of this sin was death. 2. They died suddenly, in the very act of their sin, and had not time so much as to cry, Lord, have mercy upon us! Though God is long-suffering to us-ward, yet sometimes he makes quick work with sinners; sentence is executed speedily: presumptuous sinners bring upon themselves a swift destruction, and are justly denied even space to repent. 3. They died before the Lord, i. e. before the vail that covered the mercy-seat; for even mercy itself will not suffer its own glory to be affronted. They that sinned before the Lord, died before him. Damned sinners are said to be tormented in the presence of the Lamb, intimating, that he doth not interpose on their behalf, Rev. xiv. 10. 4. They died by fire, as by fire they sinned. They slighted the fire that came from before the Lord to consume the sacrifices, and thought other fire would do every jot as well; and now God justly made them feel the power of that fire which they did not reverence. Thus they that hate to be refined by the fire of divine grace, will undoubtedly be ruined by the fire of divine wrath. The fire did not burn them to ashes, as it had done the sacrifices, nor so much as singe their coats, ver. 5. but, like lightning, struck them dead in an instant: By these different effects of the same fire, God would shew, that it was no common fire, but kindled by the breath of the Almighty, Isa. xxx. 33. 5. It is twice taken notice of in scripture, that they died childless, Numb. iii. 4. and 1 Chron. xxiv. 2. By their presumption they had reproached God's name, and God justly blotted out their names, and laid that honour in the dust, which they were proud of.

But why did the Lord deal thus severely with them? Were they not the sons of Aaron, the saint of the Lord, nephews to Moses, the great favourite of heaven? Was not the holy anointing oil sprinkled upon them, as men whom God had set apart for himself? Had they not diligently attended during the seven days of their consecration, and kept the charge of the Lord; and might not that atone for this rashness? Would it not excuse them that they were young men, as yet unexperienced in these services; that it was the first offence, and done in a transport of joy for their elevation? And besides, never could men be worse spared: A great deal of work was now lately cut out for the priests to do, and the priesthood was confined to Aaron and his seed; he has but four sons, if two of them die, there will not be hands enough to do the service of the tabernacle: If they die childless, the house

of Aaron will become weak and little, and the priesthood will be in danger of being lost for want of heirs. But none of all these considerations shall serve, either to excuse the offence, or bring off the offenders. For, 1. The sin was greatly aggravated. It was a manifest contempt of Moses, and the divine law, that was given by Moses. Hitherto it had been expressly observed concerning every thing that was done, that they did it as the Lord commanded Moses; in opposition to which it is here said, they did that which the Lord commanded them not, but they did it of their own heads. God was now teaching his people obedience, and to do every thing by rule, as becomes servants; for priests therefore to break rules, and disobey, was such a provocation as must by no means go unpunished. Their character made their sin more exceeding sinful; for the sons of Aaron, his eldest sons, whom God had chosen to be immediate attendants upon him, for them to be guilty of such a piece of presumption, it cannot be suffered. There was in their sin a contempt of God's glory, which had now newly appeared in fire; as if that fire were needless, they had as good of their own before.

2. Their punishment was a piece of necessary justice, now at the first settling of the ceremonial institutions. It is oft threatened in the law that such and such offenders should be cut off from their people; and here God explained the threatening with a witness. Now the laws concerning sacrifices were newly made; lest any should be tempted to think lightly of them, because they descended to many circumstances which seemed very minute, these, that were the first transgressors, were thus punished, for warning to others, and to shew how jealous God is in the matters of his worship: Thus he magnified the law, and made it honourable; and let his priests know, that the caution which so often occurs in the laws concerning them, that they must do so, that they die not, was not a meer bugbear, but fair warning of their danger, if they did the work of the Lord negligently. And no doubt this exemplary piece of justice at first, prevented many irregularities afterwards. Thus Ananias and Sapphira were punished, when they presumed to lye to the holy Ghost, that new-descended fire. Lastly, As the peoples falling into idolatry, presently after the moral law was given, shews the weakness of the law, and its insufficiency to take away sin; so the sin and punishment of these priests, shewed the imperfection of that priesthood from the very beginning, and its inability to shelter any from the fire of God's wrath, otherwise than as it was typical of Christ's priesthood, in the execution of which there never was, nor can be any irregularity, or false step taken.

3. Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified: and Aaron held his peace. 4. And Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel, the uncle of Aaron, and said unto them, Come near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary, out of the camp. 5. So they went near, and carried them in their coats out of the camp; as Moses had said. 6. And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazer, and unto Ithamar his sons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes, lest you die, and lest wrath come upon all the people: but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the LORD hath kindled. 7. And ye shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, lest you die; for the anointing oil of the LORD is upon you: and they did according to the word of Moses.

We may well think when Nadab and Abihu were struck with death, all about them were struck with horror; and every face, as well as theirs, gathered blackness: A mighty consternation no doubt seized them, and they were all full of confusion; but whatever the rest were, Moses was composed, and knew what he said and did; but was not displeased, as David was in a like case, 2 Sam. vi. 8. But though it touched him in a very tender part, and was a dreadful damp to one of the greatest joys he ever knew, yet he kept possession of his own soul, and took care to keep good order, and a due decorum in the sanctuary.

[1.] He endeavours to pacify Aaron, and to keep him in a good frame under this sad dispensation, ver. 3. Moses was a brother that was born for adversity, and has taught us by his example, with seasonable counsels and comforts to support the weak, and strengthen the feeble-minded.

Observe here, (1.) What it was that Moses suggested to his poor brother upon this occasion, *This is it that the Lord spake.* Note, 1. The most quieting considerations under affliction, are those that are fetched from the word of God. So and so the Lord hath said, and it is not for us to gainsay it. 2. In all God's providences it is good to observe the fulfilling of scripture, and to compare God's word and his works together; which if we do, we shall find an admirable harmony and agreement between them, and that they mutually explain and illustrate each other. But, (1.) Where did God speak this? We do not find the very words; but

to this purpose he had said, *Exod. xix. 22. Let the priests which come near to the Lord, sanctify themselves, lest the Lord break forth upon them.* Indeed the whole scope and tenor of his law spake this, that being a holy God, and a sovereign Lord, he must always be worshipped with holiness and reverence, and exactly according to his own appointment; and if any jest with him, it is at their peril: Much has been said to this purpose, as *Exod. xxix. 43, 44. xxxiv. 14. Lev. viii. 35.* (2.) What was it that God spake? It is this; (the Lord by his grace speak it to all our hearts!) *I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, whoever they are, and before all the people I will be glorified.* Note, 1. Whenever we worship God, we come nigh unto him, as spiritual priests. This consideration ought to make us very reverent and serious in all acts of devotion, that in them we approach to God, and present our selves before him. 2. It concerns us all when we come nigh to God to sanctify him, that is, to give him the praise of his holiness; to perform every religious exercise, as those that believe the God with whom we have to do is a holy God, a God of spotless purity, and transcendent perfection, *Isa. viii. 13.* 3. When we sanctify God we glorify him, for his holiness is his glory; and when we sanctify him in our solemn assemblies, we glorify him before all the people, confessing our own belief of his glory, and desiring that others also may be affected with it. 4. If God be not sanctified and glorified by us, he will be sanctified and glorified upon us: He will take vengeance on those that profane his sacred name, by trifling with him. If his rent be not paid, it shall be distrained for. (3.) But what was this to the present case? What was there in this to quiet Aaron? Two things: 1. This must silence him, that his sons deserved their death; for they were thus cut off from their people, because they did not sanctify and glorify God. The acts of necessary justice, how hard soever they may seem to bear upon the persons concerned, are not to be complained of, but submitted to. 2. This must satisfy him, that the death of his sons redounded to the honour of God, and his impartial justice would for it be adored throughout all ages.

(2.) What good effects they had upon him; *Aaron held his peace, i. e. he patiently submitted to the holy will of God in this sad providence, was dumb, and opened not his mouth, because God did it.* Something he was ready to say by way of complaint, as losers think they may have leave to speak, but he wisely suppressed it, laid his hand upon his mouth, and said nothing, for fear lest he should offend with his tongue, now his heart was hot within him. Note, 1. When God corrects us or ours for our sin, it is our duty to be silent under the correction, not to quarrel with God, arraign his justice, or charge him with folly, but to acquiesce in all that God doth; not only bearing, but accepting the punishment of iniquity, and saying, as Eli, in a case not much unlike this here, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good,* 1 Sam. iii. 18. *If our children have sinned against God, (as Bildad puts the case, Job viii. 4.) and he have cast them away for their transgression,* though it must needs be grievous to think that the children of our love should be the children of God's wrath, yet we must awfully adore the divine justice, and make no exceptions against its processes. 2. The most effectual arguments to quiet a gracious spirit under afflictions, are those that are fetched from God's glory; this silenced Aaron. It is true, he is a loser in his comforts by this severe execution, but Moses has shewed him that God is a gainer in his glory, and therefore he has not a word to say against it: If God be sanctified, Aaron is satisfied. Far be it from him that he should honour his sons more than God, or wish that God's name, or house, or law, should be exposed to reproach or contempt, for the preserving of the reputation of his family: No; now, as well as in the matter of the golden calf, Levi doth not acknowledge his brethren, nor know his own children; and therefore they shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law, Deut. xxxiii. 9, 10. Ministers and their families are sometimes exercised with sore trials, that they may be examples to the believers, of patience, and resignation to God, and may comfort others with that with which they themselves have been comforted.

[2.] Moses gives orders about the dead bodies. It was not fit they should be left to lie where they fell; yet their own father and brethren, the amazed spectators of this dismal tragedy, durst not offer to lift them up, no not to see whether there were any life left in them; they must neither be diverted from, nor disdressed for, the great work that was now upon their hands. *Let the dead bury their dead,* but they must go on with their service, i. e. rather let the dead be unburied, if there be no body else to do it, than that work for God should be left undone by those whom he hath called to it. But Moses takes care of this matter, that though they died by the hand of justice in the act of sin, yet they should be decently buried, and they were so, ver. 4, 5. 1. Some of their nearest relations were employed in it, who were coffin-germans to their father, and are here named, who would perform this office with tenderness and respect. They were Levites only, and might not have come into the sanctuary, no not upon such an occasion as this, if they had not had a special command for it. 2. They carried them out of the camp to be buried, so far were they from burying them in the place of worship, or the court of it, according to our modern usage, though they died there, that they did not bury them, nor any of their dead, within the lines of their

No. VIII.

camp; as afterwards their burying places were out of their cities. The tabernacle was pitched in the midst of the camp, so that they could not carry these dead priests to their graves, but they must carry them through one of the squadrons of the camp; and doubtless it was a very awful affecting sight to the people. The names of Nadab and Abihu were become very great and honourable among them; none more talked of, nor more expected to appear abroad after the days of their consecration, to receive the honours and caresses of the crowd, who used to adore the rising sun; and next to Moses and Aaron, who were old and going off, Nadab and Abihu (who had been in the mount with God, *Exod. xxiv. 1.*) were looked upon as the great favourites of heaven, and the hopes of their people; and now on a sudden, when scarce the tidings of the event had reached their ears, to see them both carried out dead, with the visible marks of divine vengeance upon them, as sacrifices to the justice of God, they could not chuse but cry out, *Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?* 1 Sam. vi. 20. 3. They carried them out (and it is likely buried them) in their coats, the garments of their priesthood, which they had lately put on, and perhaps were too proud of. Thus the impartiality of God's justice was proclaimed, and all the people were made to know, that even priests garments would not protect an offender from the wrath of God. And it was easy to argue, if they escape not when they transgress, can we expect to go unpunished? And the priests clothes being so soon made grave clothes, might intimate, both that *the law worketh death*, and that in process of time that priesthood it self should be abolished, and buried in the grave of the Lord Jesus.

[3.] He gives directions about the mourning.

1. That the priests must not mourn; Aaron and his two surviving sons, though sad in spirit, must not use any outward expressions of sorrow upon this sad occasion, nor so much as follow the corps one step from the door of the tabernacle, ver. 7. It was afterwards forbidden to the high priest to use the ceremonies of mourning for the death of any friend whatsoever, though it were a father or mother, *Lev. xxi. 11.* yet it was allowed at the same time to the inferior priests, to mourn for their near relations, ver. 2, 3. But here it was forbidden both to Aaron and his sons, because, (1.) They were now actually in waiting, doing a great work, which must by no means cease, *Neb. vi. 3.* and it was very much for the honour of God, that their attendance on him should take place of their respects to their nearest relations, and that all services should give way to those of their ministry. By this they must make it to appear, that they had a greater value and affection for their God, and their work, than for the best friend they had in the world; as Christ did, *Matt. xii. 47, 48.* And we are hereby taught, when we are serving God in holy duties, to keep our minds, as much as may be, intent and engaged, and not suffer them to be diverted by any worldly thoughts, or cares, or passions. Let us always attend upon the Lord without distraction. (2.) Their brethren were cut off for their transgression by the immediate hand of God, and therefore they must not mourn for them, lest they should seem to countenance the sin, or impeach the justice of God in the punishment. Instead of lamenting their own loss, they must be wholly taken up in applauding the sentence, and subscribing to the equity of it. Note, The publick concerns of God's glory ought to lie nearer our hearts than any private affections of our own. Observe, How Moses frightens them into this submission, and holds the rod over them to still their crying, ver. 6. *lest you die likewise, and lest wrath come upon all the people,* who may be in danger of suffering for your irreverence and disobedience, and ungoverned passions; and again, ver. 7. *lest you die.* See here what use we are to make of the judgments of God upon others, we must double our guard over our selves, lest we likewise perish. The death, especially the sudden death, of others, instead of moving our passion, should compose us into a holy reverence of God, a cautious separation from all sin, and a serious expectation of our own death. The reason given them is, because *the anointing oil of your God is upon you*, the honour of which must be carefully preserved, by your doing the duty of your office with cheerfulness. Note, Those that through grace have received the anointing, ought not to disturb themselves with the sorrow of the world, which worketh death. It was very hard no doubt for Aaron and his sons to contain themselves upon such an extraordinary occasion from inordinate grief, but reason and grace mastered the passion, and they bore the affliction with an obedient patience, they did according to the word of Moses, because they knew it to be the word of God. Happy they who thus are themselves under God's government, and have their passions under their own government.

2. The people must mourn. *Let the whole house of Israel bewail the burning which the Lord has kindled.* The congregation must lament not only the loss of their priests; but especially the displeasure of God, which appeared in it. They must bewail the burning that was kindled, that it might not burn further. Aaron and his sons were in danger of being too much affected with the providence, and therefore they are forbidden to mourn: The house of Israel were in danger of being too little affected with it, and therefore they are commanded to lament. Thus nature must always be governed by grace, according as it needs to be either constrained or restrained.

3 S

8. And

8. And the LORD spake unto Aaron, saying, 9. Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: 10. And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy; and between unclean and clean: 11. And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses.

Aaron having been very observant of what God said to him by Moses, now God doth him the honour to speak to him immediately; ver. 8. *The Lord spake unto Aaron*, and the rather, because what was now to be said, Aaron might perhaps have taken amiss from Moses, as if he had suspected him to have been a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber; so apt are we to resent cautions as accusations; therefore God saith it himself to him, *Do not drink wine, nor strong drink, when ye go into the tabernacle*, and this at their peril, *lest ye die*, ver. 9. Probably they had seen the ill effect of it in Nadab and Abihu, and therefore must take warning by them.

Observe here, 1. The prohibition it self, *Do not drink wine nor strong drink*. At other times they were allowed it, it was not expected that every priest should be a nazirite, but during the time of their ministration they were forbidden it. This was one of the laws in Ezekiel's temple, *Ezek. xlv. 21.* and so it is required of gospel ministers, that they be *not given to wine*, 1 Tim. iii. 3. Note, Drunkenness is bad in any, but it is especially scandalous and pernicious in ministers, who of all men ought to have the clearest heads, and the cleanest hearts.

2. The penalty annexed to the prohibition, *lest ye die; lest ye die* when you are in drink, *and so that day come upon you unawares*, Luke xxi. 34. Or, *lest ye do that which will make you liable to be cut off by the hand of God*. The danger of death we are continually in should engage us to be sober, 1 Pet. iv. 7. it is pity it should ever be used for the support of licentiousness, as it is by those who argue, *Let us eat and drink for to morrow we die*.

3. The reasons assigned for this prohibition. They must needs be sober, else they could not duly discharge their office; they will be in danger of *erring through wine*, Isa. xxviii. 7. They must be sure to keep sober, 1. That they might be able to distinguish themselves in their ministrations, between that which was sacred, and that which was common, and might never confound them, ver. 10. It concerns the Lord's ministers to put a difference between holy and unholy, both things and persons, that they may separate *between the precious and the vile*, Jer. xv. 19. 2. That they might be able to *teach the people*, ver. 11. for that was a part of the priest's work, *Deut. xxxiii. 10.* and those that are addicted to drunkenness, are very unfit to teach people God's statutes, both because they that live after the flesh can have no experimental acquaintance with the things of the Spirit, and because such teachers pull down with one hand what they build up with the other.

12. ¶ And Moses spake unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar, and unto Ithamar his sons that were left, Take the meat-offering that remaineth of the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and eat it without leaven beside the altar; for it is most holy. 13. And ye shall eat it in the holy place, because it is thy due, and thy sons due of the sacrifices of the LORD made by fire: for so I am commanded. 14. And the wave-breast, and heave-shoulder shall ye eat in a clean place, thou and thy sons, and thy daughters with thee: for they be thy due, and thy sons due, which are given out of the sacrifices of peace-offerings of the children of Israel. 15. The heave-shoulder, and the wave-breast shall they bring, with the offerings made by fire of the fat, to wave it for a wave-offering before the LORD, and it shall be thine, and thy sons with thee, by a statute for ever, as the LORD hath commanded. 16. ¶ And Moses diligently sought the goat of the sin-offering, and behold, it was burnt: and he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron, which were left alive, saying, 17. Wherefore have ye not eaten the sin-offering in the holy place, seeing it is most holy, and God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the LORD? 18. Behold, the blood of it was not brought in, within the holy place: ye should indeed have eaten it in the holy place, as I commanded. 19. And Aaron said unto Moses, Behold this day have they offered their sin-offering, and their burnt-offering before the LORD; and such things have befallen me: and if I had eaten the sin-offering to day, should it have been accepted in the sight of the LORD? 20. And when Moses heard that, he was content.

Moses is here directing Aaron to go on with his service after this interruption. Afflictions should rather quicken us to our duty

than take us off from it. Observe, ver. 12. he spake unto Aaron and to his sons *that were left*: The notice taken of their survivorship intimates, 1. That Aaron should take comfort under the loss of two of his sons from this consideration, that God had graciously spared him the other two, and he had reason to be thankful for the remnant that was left, that all his sons were not dead; and in token of his thankfulness to God, to go on cheerfully in his work. 2. That God's sparing them should be an engagement upon them to proceed in his service, and not to fly off from it. Here were four priests consecrated together, two were taken away, and two left; therefore the two that were left should endeavour to fill up the places of them that were gone, by double care and diligence in the services of the priesthood.

Now, 1. Moses repeats the directions he had formerly given them about eating their share of the sacrifices, ver. 12, 13, 14, 15. The priests must learn not only to *put a difference between the holy and the unholy*, as they had been taught, ver. 10. but also to distinguish between that which was most holy, and that which was only holy, of the things they were to eat. That part of the meat-offering which remained to the priest was most holy, and therefore must be eaten in the courts of the tabernacle, and by Aaron's sons only, ver. 12, 13. but the breast and shoulder of the peace-offerings might be eaten in any decent place out of the courts of the tabernacle, and by the daughters of their families. The meat-offerings being annexed to the burnt-offerings, were intended only and wholly for the glory of God; but the peace-offerings were ordained for the furtherance of mens joy and comfort; the former therefore were the more sacred, and to be had more in veneration. This distinction the priests must carefully observe, and take heed of making any blunders. Moses doth not pretend to give any reasons for this difference, but refers himself to his instructions; *for so am I commanded*, ver. 13. That was reason enough; he had *received of the Lord all that he had delivered unto them*, 1 Cor. xi. 23.

2. He enquires concerning one deviation from the appointment, which it seems had happened upon this occasion, which was this; there was a goat to be sacrificed as a *sin-offering for the people*, chap. ix. 15. Now the law of the sin-offerings was, that if the blood of them were brought into the holy place, as that of the sin-offerings for the priest was, then the flesh was to be burnt without the camp; otherwise it was to be eaten by the priest in the holy place, chap. vi. 30. The meaning of which is here explained, ver. 17. that the priests did hereby *bear the iniquity of the congregation*, i. e. they were types of him who was to be made sin for us, and on whom God would *lay the iniquity of us all*. Now the blood of this goat was not brought into the holy place, and yet it seems it was burnt without the camp.

Now observe here, 1. The gentle reproof Moses gives to Aaron and his sons, for this irregularity. Here again Aaron's sons are said to be those *that were left alive*, ver. 16. who therefore ought to take warning; and Moses was *angry with them*: Though he was the meekest man in the world, it seems he *could be angry*; and when he thought God was disobeyed and dishonoured, and the priesthood endangered, he would be angry. Yet observe how very mildly he deals with Aaron and his sons, considering their present affliction. He only tells them, *They should indeed have eaten it in the holy place*, but is willing to hear what they have to say for themselves, being loth to speak to the grief of those whom God had wounded.

2. The plausible excuse which Aaron makes for this mistake. Moses charged the fault upon Eleazar and Ithamar, ver. 16. but it is likely what they did was by Aaron's direction, and therefore he apologized for it. He might have pleaded that this was a sin-offering for the congregation, and if it had been a bullock it must have been wholly burnt, chap. iv. 21. and therefore why not now it was a goat? But it seems it was otherwise ordered at this time, and therefore he makes his affliction his excuse, ver. 19. Observe, 1. How he speaks of affliction, *Such things have befallen me*, such sad things, which could not but go near his heart, and make it very heavy. He was an high priest *taken from among men*, and could not put off natural affection then, when he put on the holy garments. He held his peace, ver. 3. yet his sorrow was stirred, as David's, *Psal. xxxix. 2.* Note, There may be a deep sense of affliction even there where there is a sincere resignation to the will of God in the affliction. *Such things* as never befall me before; and as I little expected now. My spirits cannot but sink, when I see my family sinking; I must needs be heavy when God is angry: thus it is easy to say a great deal to aggravate an affliction, but it is better to say little. 2. How he makes that an excuse for his varying from the appointment about the sin-offering. He could not have eaten it but in his mourning, and with a sorrowful spirit, and would that have been accepted? He doth not plead that his heart was so full of grief he had no stomach to it, but that he feared it would not be accepted. Note, (1.) Acceptance with God is the great thing we should desire and aim at in all our religious services, particularly in the Lord's supper, which is our eating of the sin-offering. (2.) The sorrow of the world is a very great hindrance to our acceptable performance of holy duties; both as it is discomposing to our selves, takes off our chariot-wheels, and makes us drive heavily, 1 Sam. i. 7, 8, and

and as it is displeasing to God, whose will it is that we should serve him cheerfully, *Deut. xii. 7.* Mourners bread was polluted, *Hos. ix. 4.* see *Mal. ii. 13.*

3. Moses acquiesces in the excuse, ver. 20. *He was content.* Perhaps he thought it justified what they had done. God had provided that what could not be eaten might be burnt. Our unfitness for duty, when it is natural and not sinful, will have great allowances made for it; and God will have mercy and not sacrifice. At least he thought it did very much extenuate the fault; *the spirit indeed was willing; but the flesh was weak.* God by Moses shewed that he considered his frame. It appeared that Aaron sincerely aimed at God's acceptance; and those that do so with an upright heart, shall find he is not extreme to mark what they do amiss. Nor must we be severe in our animadversions upon every mistake, considering our selves, lest we also be tempted.

C H A P. XI.

The ceremonial law is described by the apostle, (*Heb. ix. 9, 10.*) to consist not only in gifts and sacrifices, which hitherto have been treated of in this book, but in meats, and drinks, and divers washings from ceremonial uncleanness: the laws concerning which begin with this chapter, which puts a difference between some sorts of flesh meat and others, allowing some to be eaten as clean, and forbidding others as unclean. There is one kind of flesh of men: Nature startles at the thought of eating that, and none do it but such as are arrived to the highest degree of barbarity, and are become but one remove from brutes; therefore there needed no law against that. But there is another kind of flesh of beasts, concerning which the law directs here, ver. 1—1. another of fishes, ver. 9—12. another of birds, ver. 13—19. and another of creeping things; which are distinguished into two sorts, flying creeping things, ver. 20—28. and creeping things upon the earth, ver. 29—43. And the law concludes with the general rule of holiness, and reasons for it, ver. 44—47.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses and to Aaron, saying unto them, 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, These are the beasts which ye shall eat among all the beasts that are on the earth. 3. Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is cloven-footed, and cheweth the cud among the beasts, that shall ye eat. 4. Nevertheless, these shall ye not eat, of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the hoof: as the camel, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you. 5. And the cony, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you. 6. And the hare, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you. 7. And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be cloven-footed, yet he cheweth not the cud; he is unclean to you. 8. Of their flesh shall ye not eat, and their carcase shall ye not touch: they are unclean to you.

Now Aaron was consecrated an high priest over the house of God, God spake to him with Moses, and appoints them both as joint-commissioners to deliver his will to the people. He spake both to Moses and to Aaron about this matter; for it was particularly required of the priests that they should put a difference between clean and unclean, and teach the people to do so. After the flood God entered into covenant with Noah and his sons, he allowed them to eat flesh, *Gen. ix. 3.* whereas before they were confined to the products of the earth. But the liberty allowed to the sons of Noah is here limited to the sons of Israel. They might eat flesh, but not all kinds of flesh; some they must look upon as unclean, and forbidden to them, others as clean, and allowed them. The law in this matter is both very particular and very strict. But what reason can be given for this law? Why may not God's people have as free a use of all the creatures, as other people? 1. It is reason enough that God would have it so: his will, as it is law sufficient, so it is reason sufficient; for his will is his wisdom. He saw good thus to try and exercise the obedience of his people, not only in the solemnities of his altar, but in matters of daily occurrence at their own table, that there they might remember they were under authority. Thus God had tried the obedience of man in innocency, by forbidding him to eat of one particular tree. 2. Most of the meats forbidden as unclean, are such as were really unwholesome, and not fit to be eaten; and those of them that we think wholesome enough, and use accordingly, as the cony, the hare, and the swine, perhaps in those countries, and to their bodies, might be hurtful. And then God in this law did by them but as a wise and loving father doth by his children, whom he restrains from eating that which he knows will make them sick. Note, The Lord is for the body, and it is not only folly but sin against God, to prejudice our health for the pleasing of our appetite. 3. God would thus teach his people to distinguish themselves from other people, not only in their religious worship, but in the common actions of life. Thus he would shew them that they must not be numbered among the nations. It should seem there had been before this some difference

between the Hebrews and other nations in their food, kept up by tradition; for the Egyptians and they would not eat together, *Gen. xliii. 32.* And even before the flood there was a distinction of beasts into clean and not clean, *Gen. vii. 2.* which distinction was quite lost, with many other instances of religion among the Gentiles. But by this law it is reduced to a certainty, and ordered to be kept up among the Jews; that thus by having a diet peculiar to themselves, they might be kept from familiar conversation with their idolatrous neighbours, and might typify God's spiritual Israel, who not in these little things, but in the temper of their spirits, and the course of their lives, should be governed by a sober singularity, and not be conformed to this world. The learned observe further, That most of the creatures which by this law were to be abominated as unclean, were such as were had in mighty veneration among the heathen, not so much for food as for divination, and sacrifice to their Gods; and therefore those that are here mentioned as unclean, and an abomination, which yet they would not be in any temptation to eat, that they might keep up a religious loathing of that which the Gentiles had a superstitious value for. The swine with the late Gentiles was sacred to Venus, the owl to Minerva, the eagle to Jupiter, the dog to Hecate, &c. and all these are here made unclean.

As to the beasts there is a general rule laid down, that those beasts which did both part the hoof and chew the cud were clean, and those only: they are particularly mentioned in the repetition of this law, *Deut. xiv. 4, 5.* where it appears that they had variety enough allowed them, and needed not to complain of the confinement they were under. Those beasts that did not both *chew the cud and divide the hoof*, were unclean: by which rule the flesh of swine, and of hares, and of rabbits were prohibited to them, though commonly used among us. Therefore particularly at the eating of any of these we should give thanks for the liberty granted us by the gospel in this matter, which teacheth us, that *every creature of God is good*, and we are to call nothing common or unclean. Some observe a significancy in the rule laid down here for them to distinguish by, or at least think it may be alluded to. Meditation, and other acts of devotion, done by the hidden man of the heart, may be signified by the *chewing of the cud*, digesting our spiritual food; justice and charity towards men, and the acts of a good conversation, may be signified by the *dividing of the hoof*: Now either of these without the other will not serve to recommend us to God, but both must go together; good affections in the heart, and good works in the life: if either be wanting we are not clean, surely we are not clean. Of all the creatures here forbidden as unclean, none has been more dreaded and detested by the pious Jews than swines flesh. Many were put to death by Antiochus because they would not eat it. This probably they were most in danger of being tempted to, and therefore possessed themselves and their children with a particular antipathy to it, calling it not by its proper name, but a *strange thing*. It should seem the Gentiles used it superstitiously, *Isa. lxv. 4.* *they eat swines flesh*; and therefore God forbids all use of it to his people, lest they should learn of their neighbours to make that ill use of it. Some suggest that the prohibition of these beasts as unclean, was intended to be a caution to the people against the ill qualities of these creatures. We must not be filthy nor wallow in the mire as swine, nor timorous and faint-hearted as hares, nor dwell in the earth as rabbits; let not man that is in honour make himself like these beasts that perish. The law forbade not only the eating of them, but the very touching of them; for those that would be kept from any sin, must be careful to avoid all temptations to it, and every thing that looks towards it, or leads to it.

9. ¶ These ye shall eat of all that are in the waters: whatsoever hath fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, them shall ye eat. 10. And all that have not fins nor scales in the seas, and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters, and of any living thing, which is in the waters, they shall be an abomination unto you. 11. They shall be even an abomination unto you: ye shall not eat of their flesh, but you shall have their carcases in abomination. 12. Whatsoever hath no fins nor scales in the waters, that shall be an abomination unto you. 13. ¶ And these are they which ye shall have in abomination among the fowls, they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination, the eagle, and the ossifrage, and the ospray, 14. And the vulture, and the kite after his kind: 15. Every raven after his kind: 16. And the owl, and the night-hawk, and the cuckow, and the hawk after his kind: 17. And the little owl, and the cormorant, and the great owl, 18. And the swan, and the pelican, and the gier-eagle, 19. And the stork, the heron after her kind, and the lapwing, and the bat.

Here is, 1. A general rule concerning fishes, which were clean, and which not. All that had fins and scales they might eat, and were forbidden only those odd sort of water-animals that have not, ver. 9, 10. The ancients counted fish the most delicate food,

so far were they from allowing it on fasting-days, or making it an instance of mortification to eat fish : therefore God did not lay much restraint upon his people in them ; for he is a master that allows his servants not only for necessity but for delight. Concerning the prohibited fish, it is said, *they shall be an abomination to you*, ver. 10, 11, 12. *i. e.* ye shall count them unclean, and not only not eat of them, but keep at a distance from them. Note, Whatever is unclean should be to us an abomination ; *touch not the unclean thing*. But observe, it is to be an abomination only to you that are Jews ; but the neighbour nations were under none of these obligations, nor are they to be an abomination to us christians. The Jews were honoured with peculiar privileges, and therefore lest they should be proud of those, (*transfunt cum onere*) they were likewise laid under peculiar restraints. Thus God's spiritual Israel, as they are dignified above others by the gospel covenant of adoption and friendship, so they must be mortified more than others by the gospel commands of self-denial, and bearing the cross.

2. Concerning fowls here is no general rule given, but a particular enumeration of those fowls that they must abstain from as unclean, which implies an allowance of all other. The critics here have their hands full, to find out what is the true signification of the Hebrew words here used, some of which still remain uncertain ; some sort of fowls being peculiar to some countries. Were the law in force now, we should be concerned to know for certain what are prohibited by it ; and perhaps if we did, and were better acquainted with the nature of the fowls here mentioned, we should admire the knowledge of Adam, in giving them names expressive of their natures, *Gen. ii. 20*. But the law being repealed, and the learning in a great measure lost, it is sufficient for us to observe, that of the fowls here forbidden, (1.) Some are birds of prey, as the eagle, vulture, &c. and God would have his people to abhor every thing that is barbarous and cruel, and not to live by blood and rapine. Doves that are preyed upon were fit to be food for man, and offerings to God ; but kites and hawks, that prey upon them, must be looked upon as an abomination to God and man : for the condition of those that are persecuted for righteousness sake, appears to an eye of faith every way better than that of their persecutors. (2.) Others of them are solitary birds, that abide in dark and desolate places, as the owl and the pelican, *Psal. cii. 6*. and the cormorant and raven, *Isa. xxxiv. 11*. for God's Israel should not be a melancholy people, nor affect sadness and constant solitude. (3.) Others of them feed upon that which is impure, as the stork on serpents ; others of them on worms ; and we must not only abstain from all impurity our selves, but from communion with those that allow themselves in it. (4.) Others of them were used by the Egyptians and other Gentiles in their divinations : Some birds were reckoned fortunate, others ominous ; and their soothsayers had great regard to the flights of these birds, all which therefore must be an abomination to God's people, who must not learn the way of the heathen.

20. All fowls that creep going upon all four, shall be an abomination unto you. 21. Yet these may ye eat of every flying creeping thing that goeth upon all four, which have legs above their feet, to leap withal upon the earth : 22. Even these of them ye may eat : the locust after his kind, and the bald locust after his kind, and the beetle after his kind, and the grasshopper after his kind. 23. But all other flying creeping things, which have four feet, shall be an abomination unto you. 24. And for these ye shall be unclean : whosoever toucheth the carcase of them shall be unclean until the even. 25. And whosoever beareth ought of the carcase of them, shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even. 26. The carcasses of every beast which divideth the hoof, and is not cloven-footed, nor cheweth the cud, are unclean unto you : every one that toucheth them, shall be unclean. 27. And whatsoever goeth upon his paws, among all manner of beasts, that go on all four, those are unclean unto you : whoso toucheth their carcase, shall be unclean until the even. 28. And he that beareth the carcase of them, shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even : they are unclean unto you. 29. ¶ These also shall be unclean unto you among the creeping things that creep upon the earth : the weasel, and the mouse, and the tortoise after his kind. 30. And the ferret, and the camelion, and the lizard, and the snail, and the mole. 31. These are unclean to you among all that creep ; whosoever doth touch them when they are dead, shall be unclean until the even. 32. And upon whatsoever any of them when they are dead doth fall, it shall be unclean, whether it be any vessel of wood, or raiment, or skin, or sack, whatsoever vessel it be, wherein any work is done, it must be put into water, and it shall be unclean until the even ; so it shall be cleansed. 33. And every earthen vessel whereinto any of them

falleth, whatsoever is in it shall be unclean, and ye shall break it. 34. Of all meat which may be eaten, that on which such water cometh, shall be unclean : and all drink that may be drunk in every such vessel, shall be unclean. 35. And every thing, whereon any part of their carcase falleth, shall be unclean ; whether it be oven, or ranges for pots, they shall be broken down ; for they are unclean, and shall be unclean unto you. 36. Nevertheless, a fountain or pit wherein there is plenty of water, shall be clean : but that which toucheth their carcase shall be unclean. 37. And if any part of their carcase fall upon any sowing seed which is to be sown ; it shall be clean. 38. But if any water be put upon the seed, and any part of their carcase fall thereon ; it shall be unclean unto you. 39. And if any beast of which ye may eat, die ; he that toucheth the carcase thereof, shall be unclean until the even. 40. And he that eateth of the carcase of it, shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even : he also that beareth the carcase of it, shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even. 41. And every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, shall be an abomination : it shall not be eaten. 42. Whatsoever goeth upon the belly, and whatsoever goeth upon all four, or whatsoever hath more feet among all creeping things that creep upon the earth, them ye shall not eat : for they are an abomination.

Here is the law, 1. Concerning flying insects, as flies, wasps, bees, &c. these they might not eat, ver. 20. nor indeed are they fit to be eaten ; but there were several sorts of locusts, which in those countries were very good meat, and much used ; John Baptist lived upon them in the desert, and they are here allowed them, ver. 21. 2. Concerning the creeping things on the earth, these were all forbidden, ver. 29, 30. and again, ver. 41, 42. for it was the curse of the serpent, that *upon his belly he should go* ; and therefore between him and man there was an enmity put, *Gen. iii. 15*. which was preserved by this law. Dust is the meat of the creeping things, and therefore they are not fit to be man's meat. 3. Concerning the dead carcasses of all these unclean animals : (1.) Every one that touched them was to be unclean until the even, ver. 24, 25, 27, 28. This law is oft repeated, to possess them with a dread of every thing that was prohibited, though no particular reason for the prohibition did appear, but only the will of the law-maker. Not that they were to be looked upon as defiling to the conscience, or that it was a sin against God to touch them, unless done in contempt of the law : in many cases, somebody must of necessity touch them, to remove them ; but it was a ceremonial uncleanness they contracted, which for the time forbade them to come into the tabernacle, or to eat of any of the holy things, or so much as to converse familiarly with their neighbours. But the uncleanness continued only till the even, to signify that all ceremonial pollutions were to come to an end by the death of Christ in the evening of the world. And we must learn by daily renewing our repentance every night for the sins of the day, to cleanse our selves from the pollution we contract by them, that we may not lie down in our uncleanness. Even unclean animals they might touch while they were alive, without contracting any ceremonial uncleanness by it, as horses and dogs, because they were allowed to use them for service ; but not when they were dead, because they might not eat their flesh ; and what must not be eaten must not be touch'd, *Gen. iii. 3*. (2.) Even the vessels, or other things they fell upon, were thereby made unclean until the even, ver. 32. and if it were an earthen vessel it must be broke, ver. 33. This taught them carefully to avoid every thing that was polluting, even in their common actions. Not only the vessels of the sanctuary, but every pot in Jerusalem and Judah must be *Holiness to the Lord*, *Zech. xiv. 20, 21*. The laws in these cases are very critical, and the observance of them would be difficult, as we would think if every thing that suppose a dead mouse or rat falls upon, must be unclean ; and if it were an oven, or ranges for pots, they must all be broken down upon it, ver. 35. The exceptions also were very nice, ver. 36, &c. All which was designed to exercise them to a constant care and exactness in their obedience ; and to teach us, who by Christ are delivered from these burthensome observances, not to be less circumspect in the more weighty matters of the law. We ought as industriously to preserve our precious souls from the pollutions of sin, and as speedily to cleanse them when they are polluted, as they were to preserve and cleanse their bodies and household goods from those ceremonial pollutions.

43. Ye shall not make your selves abominable with any creeping thing that creepeth, neither shall ye make your selves unclean with them, that ye should be defiled thereby. 44. For I am the LORD your God : ye shall therefore sanctify your selves, and ye shall be holy, for I am holy : neither shall ye defile your selves with any

any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 45. For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy. 46. This is the law of the beasts, and of the fowl, and of every living creature that moveth on the waters, and of every creature that creepeth upon the earth: 47. To make a difference between the unclean and the clean, and between the beast that may be eaten, and the beast that may not be eaten.

Here is, 1. The reddition of this law, or a key to let us into the meaning of it. It was not intended merely for a bill of fare, or as the directions of a physician about their diet, but God would hereby teach them to sanctify themselves, and to be holy, *ver. 44.* That is, (1.) They must hereby learn to put a difference between good and evil, and to reckon it could not be all alike what they did, when it was not all alike what they eat. (2.) To maintain a constant observance of the divine law, and to govern themselves by that in all their actions, even those that are common, which ought to be done after a godly sort, 3 *John* 8. even eating and drinking must be by rule, and *to the glory of God*, 1 *Cor.* x. 31. (3.) To distinguish themselves from all their neighbours, as a people set apart for God, and obliged not to walk as other Gentiles: and all this is holiness. Thus these rudiments of the world were their tutors and governors, *Gal.* iv. 2, 3. to bring them to that which is the revival of our first state in Adam, and the earnest of our best state with Christ, that is, holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. This is indeed the great design of all the ordinances, that by them we may sanctify our selves, and learn to be holy. Even this law concerning their food, which seemed to stoop so very low, aimed thus high, for it was the statute law of heaven under the Old Testament as well as the New, that *without holiness no man shall see the Lord*. The caution therefore *ver. 43.* is, *Ye shall not make your selves abominable*. Note, By having fellowship with sin which is abominable, we make our selves abominable. That man is truly miserable, who is in the sight of God abominable; and that none are, but those that make themselves so. The Jewish writers themselves suggest, that the intendment of this law was to forbid them all communion by marriage, or otherwise, with the heathen, *Deut.* vii. 2, 3. And thus the moral of it is obliging to us, forbidding us to *have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness*; and without this real holiness of the heart and life, *he that offereth an oblation is as if he offered swines blood*, *Isa.* lxvi. 3. and if it were such a provocation for a man to eat swines flesh himself, much more must it be so to offer swines blood at God's altar; see *Prov.* xv. 8.

2. The reasons of this law; and they are all taken from the law-maker himself, to whom we must have respect in all acts of obedience. (1.) *I am the Lord your God*, *ver. xlv.* Therefore you are bound to do thus in pure obedience. God's sovereignty over us, and propriety in us, obligeth us to do whatever he commands us, how much soever it crosseth our own inclinations. (2.) *I am holy*, *ver. 44.* and again, *ver. 45.* If God be holy we must be so, else we cannot expect to be accepted of him. His holiness is his glory, (*Exod.* xv. 11.) and therefore it *becomes his house for ever*, *Psal.* xciii. 5. This great precept thus enforced, though it comes in here in the midst of abrogated laws, is quoted and stamped for a gospel precept, 1 *Pet.* i. 16. where it is intimated, that all these ceremonial restraints were designed to teach us, that we must not *fashion our selves according to our former lusts in our ignorance*, *ver. 14.* (3.) *I am the Lord, that bringeth you out of the land of Egypt*, *ver. 45.* This was a reason why they should cheerfully submit to distinguishing laws, who had of late been so wonderfully dignified with distinguishing favours. He that had done more for them than for any other people, might justly expect more from them.

3. The conclusion of this statute, *ver. 46, 47.* *This is the law of the beasts and of the fowl, &c.* This law was to them a statute for ever, *i. e.* as long as that oeconomy lasted; but under the gospel we find it expressly repealed by a voice from heaven to Peter, *Acts* x. 15. as it had before been virtually set aside by the death of Christ, with other the ordinances that *perished in the using*; *Touch not, taste not, handle not*, *Col.* ii. 21, 22. And now we are sure that *meat commends us not to God*, 1 *Cor.* viii. 8. and that *nothing is unclean of it self*, *Rom.* xiv. 14. nor doth that defile a man which goes into his mouth, but that which comes out from the heart, *Matt.* xv. 11. Let us therefore, (1.) Give thanks to God that we are not under this yoke, but that to us every creature of God is allowed as good, and nothing to be refused. (2.) *Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free*, and take heed of those doctrines which *command to abstain from meats*, and so would revive Moses again, 1 *Tim.* iv. 3, 4. (3.) Be strictly and conscientiously temperate in the use of the good creatures God has allowed us. If God's law has given us liberty, let us lay restraints upon our selves, and never feed our selves without fear, lest our table be a snare. *Set a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite*; and *be not desirous of dainties or varieties*, *Prov.* xxiii. 2, 3. Nature is content with a little, grace with less, but lust with nothing.

C H A P. XII.

After the law concerning clean and unclean food, comes the law concerning clean and unclean persons; and the first is in this chapter concerning the ceremonial uncleanness of women in childbirth, ver. 1—5. And concerning their purification from that uncleanness, ver. 6—8.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a woman have conceived seed, and born a man child, then she shall be unclean seven days; according to the days of the separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean. 3. And in the eighth day, the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised, 4. And she shall then continue in the blood of her purifying three and thirty days: she shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled. 5. But if she bear a maid child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her separation, and she shall continue in the blood of her purifying threescore and six days.

The law here pronounces women lying-in ceremonially unclean. The Jews say, the law extended even to an abortion, if the child was so formed as that the sex was distinguishable. 1. There was some time of strict separation immediately after the birth, which continued seven days for a son, and fourteen days for a daughter, *ver. 2, 5.* During these days she was separated from her husband and friends, and those that necessarily attended her were ceremonially unclean; which was one reason why the males were not circumcised till the eighth day, because they participated of the mother's pollution, during the days of her separation. 2. There was also a longer time appointed for their purifying; thirty three days more, (forty in all) if the birth were a male, and double that time if a female, *ver. 4, 5.* During this time they were only separated from the sanctuary, and forbidden to eat of the passover, or peace-offerings, or if a priest's wife, to eat of any thing that was holy to the Lord. Why the time of both those was double for a female to what it was for a male, I see no reason can be assigned, but the will of the law-maker; in Christ Jesus no difference is made of male and female, *Col.* iii. 11. But this ceremonial uncleanness which the law laid women in child-bed under, was to signify the pollution of sin which we are all conceived and born in, *Psal.* li. 5. For if the root be impure, so is the branch; *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?* If sin had not entred, nothing but purity and honour had attended all the products of that great blessing, *Be fruitful and multiply*; but now the nature of man is degenerated, the propagation of that nature is laid under these marks of disgrace, because of the sin and corruption that is propagated with it; and in remembrance of the curse upon the woman that was first in the transgression, that *in sorrow* (to which it is here further added, *in shame*) she should *bring forth children*. And the exclusion of the woman for so many days from the sanctuary, and all participation of the holy things, signified that our original corruption (that sinning sin which we brought into the world with us) would have excluded us for ever from the enjoyment of God and his favours, if he had not graciously provided for our purifying.

6. And when the days of her purifying are fulfilled, for a son, or for a daughter; she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering, and a young pigeon, or a turtle-dove for a sin-offering, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest: 7. Who shall offer it before the LORD, and make an atonement for her, and she shall be cleansed from the issue of her blood. This is the law for her that hath born a male, or a female. 8. And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for the burnt-offering, and the other for a sin-offering: and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean.

A woman that had lain-in, when the time set for her return to the sanctuary was come, she was not to attend there empty, but must bring her offerings, *ver. 6.* 1. A burnt-offering; a lamb if she were able, if poor a pigeon. This she was to offer in thankfulness to God for his mercy to her, in bringing her safely through the pains of child-bearing, and all the perils of child-bed; and in desire and hopes of God's further favour both to her and to the child. When a child is born, there is joy and there is hope, and therefore it was proper to bring this offering, which was of a general nature; for what we rejoice in, we must give thanks for, and what we are in hopes of, we must pray for. But besides this, 2. She must offer a sin-offering, which must be the same for poor and rich, a turtle-dove, or a young pigeon; for whatever difference

rence there may be between rich and poor in the sacrifices of acknowledgment, that of atonement is the same for both. This sin-offering was intended either, (1.) To compleat her purification from that ceremonial uncleanness, which though it was not in itself sinful, yet was typical of moral pollution: or, (2.) To make atonement for that which was really sin, either an inordinate desire of the blessing of children, or discontent and impatience under the pains of child-bearing. It is only by Christ the great sin-offering, that the corruption of our nature is done away, and to that it is owing that we are not for ever excluded by it from the sanctuary, and from eating of the holy things.

According to this law, we find that the mother of our blessed Lord, though he was not conceived in sin as others, yet *accomplished the days of her purification*, and then presented her son to the Lord, being a first-born, and brought her own offering, *a pair of turtle-doves*, Luke ii. 22, 23, 24. So poor were Christ's parents, that they were not able to bring a lamb for a burnt-offering; and so early was Christ *made under the law, to redeem them that were under it*. The morality of this law, obligeth those women that have received mercy from God in child-bearing, with all thankfulness to own God's goodness to them, acknowledging themselves unworthy of it, and (which is the best purification of women that have been saved in child-bearing, 1 Tim. ii. 15.) to *continue in faith, and charity, and holiness with sobriety*, for this shall please the Lord better than the turtle-doves, or the young pigeons.

C H A P. XIII.

The next ceremonial uncleanness is that of the leprosy; concerning which the law was very large and particular; the discovery of it in this chapter, and the cleansing of the leper in the next. Scarce any one thing in all the levitical law takes up so much room as this: (1.) Rules are here given, by which the priest must judge whether a man had the leprosy or no, according as the symptom was that appeared. 1. If it was a swelling, a scab, or a bright spot, ver. 1—17. 2. If it was a bile, ver. 18—23. 3. If it was an inflammation, ver. 24—28. 4. If it was in the head or beard, ver. 29—37. 5. If it was a bright spot, ver. 38, 39. 6. If it was in a bald head, ver. 40—44. (2.) Direction is given how the leper must be disposed of, ver. 45, 46. (3.) Concerning the leprosy in garments, ver. 47—59.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying, 2. When a man shall have in the skin of his flesh a rising, a scab or bright spot, and it be in the skin of his flesh like the plague of leprosy, then he shall be brought unto Aaron the priest, or unto one of his sons the priests. 3. And the priest shall look on the plague in the skin of the flesh: and when the hair in the plague is turned white, and the plague in sight be deeper than the skin of his flesh; it is a plague of leprosy: and the priest shall look on him, and pronounce him unclean. 4. If the bright spot be white in the skin of his flesh, and in sight be not deeper than the skin, and the hair thereof be not turned white; then the priest shall shut up him that hath the plague, seven days. 5. And the priest shall look on him the seventh day: and behold, if the plague in his sight be at a stay, and the plague spread not in the skin; then the priest shall shut him up seven days more. 6. And the priest shall look on him again the seventh day: and behold, if the plague be somewhat dark, and the plague spread not in the skin; the priest shall pronounce him clean: it is but a scab, and he shall wash his clothes, and be clean. 7. But if the scab spread much abroad in the skin, after that he hath been seen of the priest for his cleansing; he shall be seen of the priest again. 8. And if the priest see, that behold the scab spreadeth in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it is a leprosy. 9. ¶ When the plague of leprosy is in a man, then he shall be brought unto the priest. 10. And the priest shall see him: and behold, if the rising be white in the skin, and it have turned the hair white, and there be quick raw flesh in the rising; 11. It is an old leprosy in the skin of his flesh, and the priest shall pronounce him unclean, and shall not shut him up: for he is unclean. 12. And if a leprosy break out abroad in the skin, and the leprosy cover all the skin of him that hath the plague, from his head even to his foot, wheresoever the priest looketh; 13. Then the priest shall consider: and behold, if the leprosy have covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague: it is all turned white: he is clean. 14. But when raw flesh appeareth in him, he shall be unclean. 15. And the priest shall see the raw flesh, and pronounce

him to be unclean: for the raw flesh is unclean: it is a leprosy. 16. Or if the raw flesh turn again, and be changed unto white, he shall come unto the priest: 17. And the priest shall see him: and behold, if the plague be turned into white, then the priest shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague: he is clean.

Concerning the plague of leprosy we may observe in general, 1. That it was rather an uncleanness than a disease; at least so the law considered it; and therefore employed not the physicians but the priests about it. Christ is said to cleanse lepers; not to cure them. We do not read of any that died of it, but it rather buried them alive, by rendering them unfit for conversation with any, but such as were infected like themselves: Yet there is a tradition, that that Pharaoh who sought to kill Moses; was the first that ever was struck with this disease, and that he died of it. It is said to have begun first in Egypt; from whence it spread into Syria. It was very well known to Moses; when he put his own hand into his bosom, and took it out leprous. 2. That it was a plague inflicted immediately by the hand of God, and came not from natural causes, as other diseases; and therefore it must be managed according to a divine law. Miriam's leprosy, and Gehazi's, and king Uzziah's, were all the punishments of particular sins: and if generally it was so, no marvel there was so much care taken to distinguish it from a common distemper, that none might be looked upon as lying under this extraordinary token of divine displeasure, but those that really were so. 3. That it is a plague now not known in the world; what is commonly called the leprosy is of a quite different nature: This seems reserved as a particular scourge for the sinners of those times and places; the Jews retained the idolatrous customs they had learnt in Egypt, and therefore God justly caused this with some other of the diseases of Egypt to follow them. Yet we read of Naaman the Syrian, who was a leper, 2 Kings v. 1. 4. That there were other breakings out in the body, which did very much resemble the leprosy, but were not it; which might make a man sore, and loathsome, and yet not ceremonially unclean. Justly are our bodies called vile bodies, which have in them the seeds of so many diseases, by which the lives of many are made bitter to them. 5. That the judgment of it was referred to the priests: Lepers were looked upon as stigmatized by the justice of God, and therefore it was left to his servants the priests, who might be presumed to know his mark best, to pronounce who were lepers, and who were not. And the Jews say, any priest, though disabled by a blemish to attend the sanctuary, might be judge of the leprosy, provided the blemish were not in his eye. And he might (they say) take a common person to assist him in the search, but the priest only must pronounce the judgment. 6. That it was a figure of the moral pollutions of mens minds by sin, which is the leprosy of the soul, defiling to the conscience, and from which Christ alone can cleanse us; for herein the power of his grace infinitely transcends that of the legal priesthood, that the priests could only convict the leper, for by the law is the knowledge of sin; but Christ can cure the lepers, he can take away sin; *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean*; which was more than the priests could do, *Matt. viii. 2*. Some think the leprosy signified not so much sin in general, as a state of sin, by which men are separated from God, their spot not being the spot of God's children; and scandalous sin, for which men are to be shut out from the communion of the faithful. It is a work of great importance, but of great difficulty, to judge of our spiritual state; we have all cause to suspect our selves, being conscious to our selves of sores and spots, but whether clean or unclean, is the question. A man might have a scab, *ver. 6*. and yet be clean; the best have their infirmities; but as there were certain marks by which to know that it was a leprosy, so there are characters of such as are in the gall of bitterness; and the work of ministers is to declare the judgment of leprosy, and to assist those that suspect themselves in the trial of their spiritual state, remitting or retaining sin. And hence the keys of the kingdom of heaven are said to be given them, because they are to separate between the precious and the vile, and to judge who are fit as clean to partake of the holy things, and who as unclean to be debarred them. Now, (1.) Several rules are here laid down, by which the priest must go in making his judgment. 1. If the sore were but *skin-deep*, it was to be hoped it was not *the leprosy*, *ver. 4*. But if it was *deeper than the skin*, the man must be pronounced *unclean*, *ver. 3*. The infirmities that consist with grace do not sink deep into the soul, but *the mind still serves the law of God*, and the *inward man delights in it*, *Rom. vii. 22, 25*. But if the matter be really worse than it shews, and the inwards be infected, the case is dangerous. 2. If the sore *stand at a stay*, and do not *spread*, it is no leprosy, *ver. 5, 6*. But if it *spread much abroad*, and continue to do so after several inspections, the case is bad, *ver. 7, 8*. If men do not grow worse, but a stop is put to the course of their sins, and their corruptions are checked, it is to be hoped they will grow better; but if sin get ground, and they are worse every day than other, they are going down hill. 3. If there were *proud raw flesh* in the rising, the priest needed not to wait any longer, it was certainly a leprosy, *ver. 10, 11*. Nor is there any surer indication of the badness of a man's spiritual state, than

than the heart's rising in self-conceit, confidence in the flesh, and resistance of the reproofs of the word, and strivings of the Spirit. 4. If the eruption, whatever it was, *covered all the skin* from head to foot, it was no leprosy, *ver. 12, 13.* for it was an evidence that the vitals were sound and strong, and nature hereby helped it self, throwing out what was burthensom and pernicious. There is hopes in the small-pox, when they come out well. So if men freely confess their sins, and hide them not; there is no danger comparable to theirs that *cover their sins.* Some gather this from it, That there is more hopes of the profane than of hypocrites. The Publicans and Harlots went into the kingdom of heaven before Scribes and Pharisees. In one instance, the sudden breakings out of passion, though bad enough, are not so dangerous as malice concealed. Others this, That if we judge our selves, we shall not be judged; if we see and own that there is *no health in us, no soundness in our flesh,* by reason of sin, we shall find *grace in the eyes of the Lord.* (2.) The priest must take time in making his judgment, and not give it rashly: If the matter looked suspicious, he must shut up the patient *seven days,* and then *seven days* more, that his judgment might be *according to truth.* This teacheth all, both ministers and people, not to be hasty in their censures, nor to judge any thing *before the time.* If *some mens sins go before unto judgment,* others *follow after,* and so mens *good works;* therefore let nothing be done *suddenly,* 1 Tim. v. 22, 24, 25. (3.) If the person suspected were found to be clean, yet he must *wash his clothes,* *ver. 6.* because he had been under the suspicion, and there had been in him that which gave ground for the suspicion. Even the prisoner that is acquitted must go down on his knees: We have need to wash in the blood of Christ from our spots, though they be not leprosy spots; for who can say, *I am pure from sin;* though there are those who through grace are *innocent from the great transgression.*

18. ¶ The flesh also, in which, even in the skin thereof was a bile, and is healed, 19. And in the place of the bile there be a white rising, or a bright spot white, and somewhat reddish, and it be shewed to the priest; 20. And if when the priest seeth it, behold, it be in sight lower than the skin, and the hair thereof be turned white; the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it is a plague of leprosy broken out of the bile. 21. But if the priest look on it, and behold, there be no white hairs therein, and if it be not lower than the skin, but be somewhat dark; then the priest shall shut him up seven days: 22. And if it spread much abroad in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is a plague. 23. But if the bright spot stay in his place, and spread not, it is a burning bile; and the priest shall pronounce him clean. 24. ¶ Or if there be any flesh, in the skin whereof there is a hot burning, and the quick flesh that burneth have a white bright spot, somewhat reddish, or white; 25. Then the priest shall look upon it: and behold, if the hair in the bright spot be turned white, and it be in sight deeper than the skin; it is a leprosy broken out of the burning: wherefore the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it is the plague of leprosy. 26. But if the priest look on it, and behold, there be no white hair on the bright spot, and it be no lower than the other skin, but be somewhat dark; then the priest shall shut him up seven days. 27. And the priest shall look upon him the seventh day: and if it be spread much abroad in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it is the plague of leprosy. 28. And if the bright spot stay in his place, and spread not in the skin, but it be somewhat dark; it is a rising of the burning, and the priest shall pronounce him clean: for it is an inflammation of the burning. 29. ¶ If a man or woman hath a plague upon the head or the beard; 30. Then the priest shall see the plague: and behold, if it be in sight deeper than the skin, and there be in it a yellow thin hair; then the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it is a dry scall, even a leprosy upon the head or beard; 31. And if the priest look on the plague of the scall, and behold, it be not in sight deeper than the skin, and that there is no black hair in it; then the priest shall shut up him that hath the plague of the scall, seven days. 32. And in the seventh day the priest shall look on the plague: and behold, if the scall spread not, and there be in it no yellow hair, and the scall be not in sight deeper than the skin; 33. He shall be shaven, but the scall shall he not shave: and the priest shall shut up him that hath the scall seven days more. 34. And in the seventh day the priest shall look on the scall: and behold, if the scall be not spread in the skin, nor be in sight deeper than the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean: and he shall

wash his clothes, and be clean. 35. But if the scall spread much in the skin after his cleansing; 36. Then the priest shall look on him; and behold, if the scall be spread in the skin, the priest shall not seek for yellow hair: he is unclean: 37. But if the scall be in his sight at a stay, and that there is black hair grown up therein; the scall is healed, he is clean: and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

The priest is here instructed what judgment to make if there were any appearance of a leprosy, either (1.) In an old ulcer, or bile, that has been healed, *ver. 18, &c.* When old sores, that seemed to have been cured, break out again, it is to be feared there is a leprosy in them; such is the danger of those that having escaped the pollutions of the world, are again *entangled therein,* and *overcome.* Or, (2.) In a burn, by accident, for that seems to be meant, *ver. 24, &c.* The burning of strife and contention often proves the occasion of the rising up and breaking out of that corruption, which witnesseth to mens faces that they are unclean. (3.) In a scall head. And in this commonly the judgment turned upon a very small matter. If the hair in the scall were black, it was a sign of soundness; if yellow, it was an indication of a *leprosy,* *ver. 30—37.* Other of the rules in these cases, are the same with those mentioned before.

In reading of these several sorts of Ailments, it will be good for us, 1. To lament the calamitous state of humane life, which lies exposed to so many grievances: What troops of diseases are we beset with on every side, and by sin they all entered. 2. To give thanks to God, if he has never afflicted us with any of these sores: if the constitution be healthful, the body lively and easy, we are bound to glorify God with our bodies.

38. ¶ If a man also or a woman have in the skin of their flesh bright spots, even white bright spots; 39. Then the priest shall look: and behold, if the bright spots in the skin of their flesh be darkish white; it is a freckled spot that groweth in the skin: he is clean. 40. And the man whose hair is fallen off his head, he is bald: yet is he clean. 41. And he that hath his hair fallen off, from the part of his head toward his face, he is forehead bald: yet is he clean. 42. And if there be in the bald head, or bald forehead, a white reddish sore; it is a leprosy sprung up in his bald head or his bald forehead. 43. Then the priest shall look upon it; and behold, if the rising of the sore be white reddish in his bald head, or in his bald forehead, as the leprosy appeareth in the skin of the flesh; 44. He is a leprous man, he is unclean: the priest shall pronounce him utterly unclean, his plague is in his head. 45. And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean. 46. All the days wherein the plague shall be in him, he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be.

Here is, 1. Proviso's, that neither a *freckled skin,* nor a *bald head,* should be mistaken for a leprosy, *ver. 38—41.* Every deformity must not presently be made a ceremonial defilement. Elifha was jeered for his *bald head,* 2 Kings ii. 23. but they were the children of Bethel, who turned it to his reproach, that knew not the judgments of their God.

2. A particular brand set upon the leprosy, if at any time it did appear in a *bald head,* *ver. 44.* *The plague is in his head, he is utterly unclean.* If the leprosy of sin have seized the head, if the judgment be corrupted, and wicked principles embraced, which countenance and support wicked practices, it is an *utter uncleanness,* from which few are ever cleansed. Soundness in the faith keeps the leprosy from the head, and saves conscience from being shipwrecked.

3. Directions what must be done with the *convicted leper.* When the priest upon mature deliberation had solemnly pronounced him unclean, 1. He must pronounce himself so, *ver. 45.* He must put himself into the posture of a mourner, and cry *unclean, unclean.* The leprosy was not it self a sin, but it was a sad token of God's displeasure, and a sore affliction to him that was under it. It was a reproach to his name, put a full stop to his business in the world, cut him off from conversation with his friends and relations, condemned him to banishment till he was cleansed; shut him out from the sanctuary, and was in effect the ruin of all the comfort he could have in this world. Heman it should seem either was a leper, or alludes to the melancholy condition of a leper, *Psal. lxxxviii. 8, &c.* He must therefore (1.) humble himself under the mighty hand of God, not insisting upon his cleanness, when the priest had pronounced him unclean, but justifying God, and accepting the *punishment of his iniquity.* He must signify this by *rending his clothes, uncovering his head, and covering his upper lip,* all tokens of shame, and confusion of face, and very significant of that

that self-lothing and self-abasement which should fill the hearts of penitents, the language of which is self-judging. Thus must we take to our selves the shame that belongs to us, and with broken hearts call our selves by our own name, *unclean, unclean*; heart unclean, life unclean; unclean by original corruption, unclean by actual transgression; *unclean*, and therefore worthy to be for ever excluded from communion with God, and all hope of happiness in him. *We are all as an unclean thing*, Isa. lxiv. 6. *Unclean*, and therefore undone, if infinite mercy do not interpose. (2.) He must give warning to others, to take heed of coming near him. Wherever he went he must cry to those he saw at a distance, *I am unclean, unclean*, take heed of touching me. Not that the leprosy was catching, but by the touch of a leper a ceremonial uncleanness was contracted: Every one therefore was concerned to avoid it; and the leper himself must give notice of the danger. And this was all that the law could do, in that it was weak through the flesh; it taught the leper to cry *unclean, unclean*, but the gospel has put another cry into the lepers mouths, *Luke xvii. 12, 13.* where we find ten lepers crying with a loud voice, *Jesus, master, have mercy on us.* The law only shews us our disease, the gospel shews us our help in Christ. 2. He must then be shut out of the camp, and afterwards, when they came to Canaan, out of the city, town or village where he lived, and *dwell alone*, ver. 46. associating with none but those that were lepers like himself. When king Uzziah became a leper, he was banished his palace, and *dwelt in a several house*, 2 Chron. xxvi. 21. and see 2 Kings vii. 3. This typified the purity which ought to be preserved in the gospel church, by the solemn and authoritative exclusion of scandalous sinners that hate to be reformed from the communion of the faithful; *Put away from among your selves that wicked person*, 1 Cor. v. 13.

47. ¶ The garment also, that the plague of leprosy is in, whether it be a woollen garment, or a linen garment, 48. Whether it be in the warp, or woof, of linen or of woollen, whether in a skin, or in any thing made of skin; 49. And if the plague be greenish or reddish in the garment, or in the skin, either in the warp or in the woof, or in any thing of skin: it is a plague of leprosy, and shall be shewed unto the priest. 50. And the priest shall look upon the plague, and shut up it that hath the plague, seven days. 51. And he shall look on the plague on the seventh day: if the plague be spread in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in a skin, or in any work that is made of skin; the plague is a fretting leprosy: it is unclean. 52. He shall therefore burn that garment, whether warp or woof, in woollen or in linen, or in any thing of skin, wherein the plague is: for it is a fretting leprosy: it shall be burnt in the fire. 53. And if the priest shall look, and behold, the plague be not spread in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in any thing of skin; 54. Then the priest shall command that they wash the thing wherein the plague is, and he shall shut it up seven days more. 55. And the priest shall look on the plague after that it is washed: and behold, if the plague have not changed his colour, and the plague be not spread, it is unclean, thou shalt burn it in the fire: it is fret inward, whether it be bare within or without. 56. And if the priest look, and behold the plague be somewhat dark after the washing of it, then he shall rend it out of the garment, or out of the skin, or out of the warp, or out of the woof: 57. And if it appear still in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in any thing of skin, it is a spreading plague: thou shalt burn that wherein the plague is, with fire. 58. And the garment, either warp, or woof, or whatsoever thing of skin it be, which thou shalt wash, if the plague be departed from them, then it shall be washed the second time, and shall be clean. 59. This is the law of the plague of leprosy in a garment of woollen or linen, either in the warp, or woof, or any thing of skins, to pronounce it clean, or to pronounce it unclean.

This is the law concerning the plague of leprosy in a garment, whether linen or woollen. A leprosy in a garment, with discernible indications of it, the colour changed by it, the garment fretted, the nap worn off, and this in some one particular part of the garment, and increasing when it was shut up, and not to be got out by washing, is a thing which to us now is altogether unaccountable. The learned confess, that it was a sign and a miracle in Israel, an extraordinary punishment inflicted by the divine power, as a token of great displeasure against a person or family. (1.) The process was much the same with that concerning a leprous person. The garment suspected to be tainted was not to be burnt immediately, though it may be there would have been no great loss of it; for in

no case must sentence be given merely upon a surmise, but it must be *shewed to the priest*. If upon search it was found that there was a *leprous spot* (the Jews say, no bigger than a bean) it must be *burnt*, or at least that part of the garment in which the spot was, ver. 52, 57. If the cause of the suspicion were gone, it must be *washed*, and then might be used, ver. 58. (2.) The signification also was much the same, to intimate the great malignity there is in sin: it not only defiles the sinner's conscience, but it brings a stain upon all his employments and enjoyments, all he has, and all he doth. *To them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure*, Tit. i. 15. And we are hereby taught to hate even *the garments spotted with the flesh*, Jude 23. Those that make their clothes servants to their pride and lust, may see them thereby tainted with a leprosy, and doomed to the fire, Isa. iii. 18—24. But the ornament of *the hidden man of the heart is incorruptible*, 1 Pet. iii. 4. The robes of righteousness never fret, nor are moth-eaten.

C H A P. XIV.

The former chapter directed the priests how to convict a leper of ceremonial uncleanness; no prescriptions are given for his cure; but when God had cured him, the priests in this chapter directed how to cleanse him. The remedy here is only adapted to the ceremonial part of his disease; but the authority Christ gave to his ministers, was to cure the lepers, and so to cleanse them. We have here, 1. The solemn declaration of the lepers being clean, with the significant ceremony attending it, ver. 1—9. 2. The sacrifices which he was to offer to God eight days after, ver. 10—32. 3. The management of a house, in which appeared signs of a leprosy, ver. 33—53. And the conclusion and summary of this whole matter, ver. 54—57.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. This shall be the law of the leper, in the day of his cleansing: he shall be brought unto the priest: 3. And the priest shall go forth out of the camp; and the priest shall look, and behold, if the plague of leprosy be healed in the leper; 4. Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed, two birds alive, and clean, and cedar-wood, and scarlet, and hyssop. 5. And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel, over running water. 6. As for the living bird, he shall take it and the cedar-wood, and the scarlet and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird, in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water. 7. And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field. 8. And he that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean: and after that he shall come into the camp, and shall tarry abroad out of his tent seven days. 9. But it shall be on the seventh day, that he shall shave all his hair off his head, and his beard, and his eye-brows, even all his hair he shall shave off, and he shall wash his clothes, also he shall wash his flesh in water, and he shall be clean.

Here, 1. It is supposed that the plague of the leprosy was not an incurable disease. Uzziah's indeed continued to the day of his death, and Gehazi's was entailed upon his seed; but Miriam's lasted only *seven days*: we may suppose that it often wore off in process of time: though God contend long, he will *not contend for ever*. 2. The judgment of the cure, as well as that of the disease, was referred to the priest. He must *go out of the camp*, to the leper, to see whether his *leprosy was healed*, ver. 3. And we may suppose the priest did not contract any ceremonial uncleanness, by coming near the leper, as another person would. It was in mercy to the poor lepers that the priests particularly had orders to attend them, for *the priests lips should keep knowledge*; and those in affliction had need to be instructed, both how to bear their afflictions, and how to reap benefit by them; had need of the word in concurrence with the rod, to bring them to repentance: therefore it is well for those that are sick, if they have these messengers of the Lord of hosts with them, these interpreters, to *shew unto them God's uprightness*, Job xxxiii. 23. When the leper was shut out, and could not go to the priests, it was well the priests might come to him. *Is any sick, let him send for the elders*, the ministers, Jam. v. 14. If we apply it to the spiritual leprosy of sin, it intimates, That when we withdraw from those who walk disorderly, that they may be ashamed, we must not count them as enemies, but admonish them as brethren, 2 Thess. iii. 15. And also, that when God by his grace hath brought those to repentance, who were shut out of communion for scandal, they ought with tenderness, and joy, and sincere affection to be received in again. Thus Paul orders concerning the excommunicated Corinthians, that when he had given evidences of his repentance they should forgive

forgive him, and comfort him, and confirm their love towards him, 2 Cor. ii. 7, 8. And the ministers are entrusted by our master with the declarative power of loosing as well as binding; both must be done with great caution and deliberation, impartially; and without respect of persons; with earnest prayer to God for direction, and a sincere regard to the edification of the body of Christ: due care being always taken that sinners may not be encouraged by an excess of lenity, nor penitents discouraged by an excess of severity. Wisdom and sincerity are profitable to direct in this case. 3. If it were found that the leprosy was healed, the priest must declare it with a particular solemnity. The leper or his friends were to get ready two birds caught for this purpose, (any sort of wild birds that were clean) and cedar-wood, and scarlet, and hyssop, for all these were to be used in the ceremony.

1. A preparation was to be made of blood and water, with which the leper must be sprinkled. One of the birds (and the Jews say, if there were any difference, it must be the larger and better of the two) was to be killed over an earthen cup of spring-water, so that the blood of the bird might discolour the water. This (as some other types) had its accomplishment in the death of Christ, when out of his pierced side there came water and blood, John xix. 34. Thus Christ comes into the soul for its cure and cleansing, not by water only, but by water and blood, 1 John v. 6.

2. The living bird, with a little scarlet wool, and a bunch of hyssop, must be fastened to a cedar-stick, dipped in the water and blood, which must be so sprinkled upon him that was to be cleansed, ver. 6, 7. The cedar-wood signified the restoring of the leper to his strength and soundness, for that is a sort of wood not apt to putrify. The scarlet wool signified his recovering a florid colour again, for the leprosy made him white as snow. And the hyssop intimated, the removing of that unfavoury smell, which commonly attended the leprosy. The cedar the stateliest plant, and hyssop the meanest, are here used together in this service; (see 1 Kings iv. 33.) For those of the lowest rank in the church may be of use in their place, as well as those that are most eminent, 1 Cor. xii. 21. Some make the slain bird to typify Christ dying for our sins, and the living bird Christ rising again for our justification: And the dipping of the living bird in the blood of the slain bird intimated, that the merit of Christ's death was that which made his resurrection effectual for our justification. He took his blood with him into the holy place, and there appeared a lamb as it had been slain. The cedar, scarlet, and hyssop, must all be dipped in the blood; for the word and ordinances, and all the operations of the Spirit, receive their efficacy for our cleansing from the blood of Christ. The leper must be sprinkled seven times, to signify a compleat purification; in allusion to which David prays, *Wash me thoroughly*, Psal. li. 2. Naaman was bid to wash seven times, 2 Kings v. 10.

3. The living bird was then to be let loose in the open field, to signify, that the leper being cleansed was now no longer under restraint and confinement, but might take his liberty to go where he pleased. But this being signified by the flight of a bird towards heaven, was an intimation to him henceforward to seek the things that are above, and not to spend this new life God had restored him to merely in the pursuit of earthly things. This typified that glorious liberty of the children of God; which they are advanced to who through grace are sprinkled from an evil conscience. They whose souls before bowed down to the dust (Psal. xlv. 25.) in grief and fear, now fly in the open firmament of heaven, and soar upwards upon the wings of faith and hope, and holy love and joy.

4. The priest must upon this pronounce him clean. It was requisite this should be done with solemnity, that the leper might himself be the more affected with the mercy of God to him in his recovery, and that others might be satisfied to converse with him. Christ is our priest, to whom the Father hath committed all judgment, and particularly the judgment of the leprosy. By his definitive sentence impenitent sinners will have their everlasting portion assigned them with the unclean, Job xxxvi. 14. out of the holy city; and all that by his grace are cured and cleansed, shall be received into the camp of the saints, into which no unclean thing shall enter. Those are clean indeed whom Christ pronounceth so, and they need not regard what men say of them. But though Christ was the end of this law for righteousness, yet being in the days of his flesh made under the law, which as yet stood unrepealed, he ordered those lepers, whom he had cured miraculously, to go and shew themselves to the priest, and offer for their cleansing according to the law, Matt. viii. 4. Luke xvii. 14. The type must be kept up till it was answered by its antitype.

Lastly, When the leper was pronounced clean, he must wash his body and his clothes, and shave off all his hair, ver. 8. must still tarry seven days out of the camp, and on the seventh day must do it again, ver. 9. The priest having pronounced him clean from the disease, he must make himself as clean as ever he could from all the remains of it, and from all other defilements, and he must take time to do this. Thus they who have the comfort of the remission of their sins, by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon their consciences, must with the utmost care and caution cleanse themselves from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit, and thoroughly purge themselves from their old sins: for every one

that hath this hope in him, will be concerned to purify himself.

10. And on the eighth day he shall take two he-lambs without blemish, and one ew lamb of the first year without blemish, and three tenth-deals of fine flour for a meat-offering, mingled with oil, and one log of oil. 11. And the priest that maketh him clean, shall present the man that is to be made clean, and those things before the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 12. And the priest shall take one he-lamb, and offer him for a trespass-offering, and the log of oil, and wave them for a wave-offering before the LORD. 13. And he shall slay the lamb in the place where he shall kill the sin-offering, and the burnt-offering, in the holy place: for as the sin-offering is the priests, so is the trespass-offering: it is most holy. 14. And the priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass-offering, and the priest shall put it upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot. 15. And the priest shall take some of the log of oil, and pour it into the palm of his own left hand: 16. And the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand, and shall sprinkle of the oil, with his finger, seven times before the LORD. 17. And of the rest of the oil that is in his hand, shall the priest put upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the blood of the trespass-offering. 18. And the remnant of the oil that is in the priests hand he shall pour upon the head of him that is to be cleansed: and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the LORD. 19. And the priest shall offer the sin-offering, and make an atonement for him that is to be cleansed from his uncleanness, and afterward he shall kill the burnt-offering. 20. And the priest shall offer the burnt-offering, and the meat-offering upon the altar: and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and he shall be clean.

To compleat the purification of the leper, on the eighth day, after the former solemnity performed without the camp, and as it should seem, before he returned to his own habitation, he was to attend at the door of the tabernacle, and was there to be presented to the Lord, with his offerings, ver. 11. Observe here, 1. That the mercies of God oblige us to present our selves to him, Rom. xii. 1. 2. When God hath restored us to the liberty of ordinances again, after restraint by sickness, distance, or otherwise, we should take the first opportunity of testifying our respect to God, and our affection to his sanctuary, by a diligent improvement of the liberty we are restored to. When Christ had healed the impotent man, he soon after found him in the temple, John v. 14. Hezekiah asks, *What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the Lord?* When he means, *What is the sign that I shall recover?* intimating, that if God restored him his health, so that he should be able to go abroad, that should be the first place he would go to. 3. When we present our selves before the Lord, we must present our offerings, devoting to God with our selves all we have and can do. 4. Both we and our offerings must be presented before the Lord, by the priest that made us clean, even our Lord Jesus, else neither we nor they can be accepted.

Three lambs the cleansed leper was to bring, with a meat-offering, and a log of oil, which was about half a pint.

Now, 1. Most of the ceremony peculiar to this case was about the trespass-offering, the lamb for which was offered first, ver. 12. And besides the usual rites with which the trespass-offering was offered, some of the blood was to be put upon the ear, and thumb, and great toe of the leper that was to be cleansed, ver. 14. The very same ceremony that was used in the consecration of the priests, chap. viii. 23, 24. It was a mortification to them to see the same purification necessary for them that was for a leper. The Jews say, that the leper stood without the gate of the tabernacle, and the priest within, and thus the ceremony was performed through the gate, signifying, that now he was admitted with other Israelites to attend in the courts of the Lord's house again, and was as welcome as ever, though he had been a leper, and though perhaps the name might stick by him as long as he lived, (as we read of one who probably was cleansed by our Lord Jesus, who yet afterwards is called *Simon the leper*, Matt. xxvi. 6.) yet he was as free as ever to communion with God and man. After the blood of the offering had been put with the priest's finger upon the extremities of the body, to include the whole, some of his oil that he brought, which was first waved, and then sprinkled before the Lord, was in like manner put in the same places upon the blood. The blood (saith the learned bishop Patrick) seems to have been a token of forgiveness, the oil of healing; for God first forgiveth

our iniquities, and then *healeth our diseases*, Psal. ciii. 3. see *Isa. xxxviii. 17.* Wherever the blood of Christ is applied for justification, the oil of the Spirit is applied for sanctification; for these two are inseparable, and both necessary to our acceptance with God. Nor shall our former leprosy, if it be healed by repentance, be any bar to these glorious privileges. Cleansed lepers are as welcome to the blood and the oil as consecrated priests. *Such were some of you, but ye are washed.* When the leper was sprinkled, the water must have blood in it, *ver. 5.* When he was anointed, the oil must have blood under it, to signify that all the graces and comforts of the Spirit, all his purifying dignifying influences are owing to the death of Christ: it is by his blood alone that we are sanctified.

2. Besides this there must be a sin-offering and a burnt-offering, a lamb for each, *ver. 19, 20.* By each of these offerings it is said, the priest shall *make an atonement for him.* 1. His moral guilt shall be removed; the sin for which the leprosy was sent shall be pardoned, and all the sins he had been guilty of in his afflicted state. Note, The removal of any outward trouble is then doubly comfortable to us, when at the same time God gives us some assurance of the forgiveness of our sins. If we *receive the atonement*, we have reason to rejoice, *Rom. v. 11.* 2. His ceremonial pollution shall be removed, which had kept him from the participation of the holy things. And this is called making an atonement for him, because our restoration to the privileges of God's children, typified hereby, is owing purely to the great propitiation. When the atonement is made for him he shall be clean, both to his own satisfaction, and to his reputation among his neighbours; he shall retrieve both his credit and his comfort; and both these true penitents become entitled to, both ease and honour, by their interest in the atonement.

The burnt-offering, besides the atonement that was made by it, was a thankful acknowledgment of God's mercy to him: and the more immediate the hand of God was both in the sickness and in the cure, the more reason he had thus to give glory to him; and thus, as our Saviour speaks, *Mark i. 44.* to offer for his cleansing all those things which Moses commanded for a testimony unto them.

21. And if he be poor, and cannot get so much, then he shall take one lamb for a trespass-offering to be waved, to make an atonement for him, and one tenth-deal of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat-offering, and a log of oil: 22. And two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, such as he is able to get: and the one shall be a sin-offering, and the other a burnt-offering. 23. And he shall bring them on the eighth day, for his cleansing, unto the priest, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, before the LORD. 24. And the priest shall take the lamb of the trespass-offering, and the log of oil, and the priest shall wave them for a wave-offering before the LORD. 25. And he shall kill the lamb of the trespass-offering, and the priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass-offering, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot. 26. And the priest shall pour of the oil into the palm of his own left hand. 27. And the priest shall sprinkle with his right finger, some of the oil that is in his left hand, seven times before the LORD. 28. And the priest shall put of the oil that is in his hand, upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the place of the blood of the trespass-offering. 29. And the rest of the oil that is in the priest's hand, he shall put upon the head of him that is to be cleansed, to make an atonement for him before the LORD. 30. And he shall offer the one of the turtle-doves, or of the young pigeons, such as he can get: 31. Even such as he is able to get, the one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering, with the meat-offering. And the priest shall make an atonement for him that is to be cleansed, before the LORD. 32. This is the law of him in whom is the plague of leprosy, whose hand is not able to get that which pertaineth to his cleansing.

We have here the gracious provision the law made for the cleansing of poor lepers. If they were not able to bring three lambs, and three tenth-deals of flour, they must bring one lamb, and one tenth-deal of flour; and instead of the other two lambs, two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, *ver. 21, 22.* Here see, 1. That the poverty of the person concerned would not excuse him, if he brought no offering at all. Let none think, that because they are poor God requires no service from them, since he has considered them, and demands that which it is in the power of

the poorest to give: *My son, give me thy heart,* and with that the calves of thy lips shall be accepted instead of the calves of the stall. 2. That God expected from those that were poor but according to their ability; *his commandments are not grievous*, nor doth he make us to serve with an offering. The poor are as welcome to God's altar as the rich; and if there be first a willing mind, and an honest heart, two pigeons, when they are the utmost a man is able to get, are as acceptable to God as two lambs; for he requires according to what a man has, and not according to what he has not. But it is observable, that though a meaner sacrifice was accepted from the poor, yet the very same ceremony was used for them as was for the rich; for their souls are as precious, and Christ and his gospel are the same to both. Let not us therefore have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons, James ii. 1.

33. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, 34. When ye come into the land of Canaan, which I give to you for a possession, and I put the plague of leprosy in a house of the land of your possession; 35. And he that oweth the house shall come and tell the priest, saying, It seemeth to me there is as it were a plague in the house: 36. Then the priest shall command that they empty the house, before the priest go into it to see the plague: that all that is in the house be not made unclean: and afterward the priest shall go in to see the house. 37. And he shall look on the plague, and behold, if the plague be in the walls of the house, with hollow strakes, greenish or reddish, which in sight are lower than the wall; 38. Then the priest shall go out of the house, to the door of the house, and shut up the house seven days. 39. And the priest shall come again the seventh day, and shall look: and behold, if the plague be spread in the walls of the house; 40. Then the priest shall command that they take away the stones in which the plague is, and they shall cast them into an unclean place without the city. 41. And he shall cause the house to be scraped within round about, and they shall pour out the dust that they scrape off, without the city, into an unclean place. 42. And they shall take other stones, and put them in the place of those stones, and he shall take other mortar, and shall plaister the house. 43. And if the plague come again, and break out in the house, after that he hath taken away the stones, and after he hath scraped the house, and after it is plaistered; 44. Then the priest shall come, and look: and behold, if the plague be spread in the house, it is a fretting leprosy in the house: it is unclean. 45. And he shall break down the house, the stones of it, and the timber thereof, and all the mortar of the house: and he shall carry them forth out of the city into an unclean place. 46. Moreover, he that goeth into the house all the while that it is shut up, shall be unclean until the even. 47. And he that lieth in the house, shall wash his clothes: and he that eateth in the house, shall wash his clothes. 48. And if the priest shall come in, and look upon it, and behold, the plague hath not spread in the house, after the house was plaistered: then the priest shall pronounce the house clean, because the plague is healed. 49. And he shall take to cleanse the house two birds, and cedar-wood, and scarlet, and hyssop. 50. And he shall kill the one of the birds in an earthen vessel, over running water. 51. And he shall take the cedar-wood, and the hyssop, and the scarlet, and the living bird, and dip them in the blood of the slain bird, and in the running water, and sprinkle the house seven times. 52. And he shall cleanse the house with the blood of the bird, and with the running water, and with the living bird, and with the cedar-wood, and with the hyssop, and with the scarlet. 53. But he shall let go the living bird out of the city into the open fields, and make an atonement for the house: and it shall be clean.

This is the law concerning the leprosy in a house. Now they were in the wilderness, they dwelt in tents, and had no houses, and therefore this law is made only an appendix to the former laws concerning the leprosy, because it related not to their present state, but to their future settlement.

The leprosy in an house is as unaccountable as the leprosy in a garment; but if we see not what natural causes of it can be assigned, we may resolve it into the power of the God of nature, who here saith, *I put the leprosy in a house*, *ver. 34.* as his curse is said to enter into a house, and consume it with the timber and stones thereof, *Zech. v. 4.*

Now, 1. It is supposed that even in Canaan it self, the land of promise, their houses might be infected with a leprosy. Though it was a holy land, that would not secure them from this plague, while the inhabitants were many of them so unholy. Thus, a place and a name in the visible church, will not secure wicked people from God's judgments.

2. It is likewise taken for granted, that the owner of the house will make the priest acquainted with it, as soon as he sees the least cause to suspect the leprosy in his house, ver. 35. *It seemeth to me there is as it were a plague in the house.* Sin, where that reigns in a house is a plague there, as it is in a heart. And masters of families should be aware and afraid of the first appearance of gross sin in their families; and put away the iniquity, whatever it is, far from their tabernacles, Job xxii. 23. They should be jealous with a godly jealousy concerning those under their charge, lest they be drawn into sin, and take early advice, if it but seem that there is a plague in the house, lest the contagion spread, and many be by it defiled and destroyed.

3. If the priest upon search find that the leprosy is got into the house, he must try to cure it, by taking out that part of the building that was infected, ver. 40, 41. This was like cutting off a gangrened limb, for the preservation of the rest of the body. Corruption should be purged out in time, before it spread; for a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. *If thy right hand offend thee cut it off.*

4. If yet it remained in the house, the whole house must be pulled down, and all the materials carried to the dunghil, ver. 44, 45. The owner had better be without a dwelling, than live in one that was infected. Note, The leprosy of sin, if it be obstinate to the methods of cure, will at last be the ruin of families and churches. If Babylon will not be healed, she shall be forsaken and abandoned, and, like the leprous house, they shall not take of her a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations, Jer. li. 9, 26. The remainders of sin and corruption in our mortal bodies, are like this leprosy in the house; after all our pains in scraping and plastering we shall never be quite clear of it, till the earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, and taken down; when we are dead we shall be free from sin, and not till then, Rom. vi. 7.

5. If the taking out of the infected stones cured the house, and the leprosy did not spread any further, then the house must be cleansed; not only aired that it might be healthful, but purified from the ceremonial pollution, that it might be fit to be the habitation of an Israelite. The ceremony of its cleansing was much the same with that of the cleansing of a leprous person, ver. 49, &c. This intimated, that the house was smitten for the man's sake, (as bishop Patrick expresseth it) and he was to look upon himself as preserved by the divine mercy. The houses of Israelites are said to be dedicated, Deut. xx. 5. for they were an holy nation, and therefore they ought to keep their houses pure from all ceremonial pollutions, that they might be fit for the service of that God to whom they were devoted. And the same care should we take to reform whatever is amiss in our families, that we and our houses may serve the Lord; see Gen. xxxv. 2.

Some have thought the leprosy in the house was typical of the idolatry of the Jewish church, which did strangely cleave to it; and though some of the reforming kings took away the infected stones, yet still it broke out again, till by the captivity in Babylon God took down the house, and carried it to an unclean land; and that proved an effectual cure of their inclination to idols, and idolatrous worships.

54. This is the law for all manner of plague of leprosy and scall. 55. And for the leprosy of a garment, and of an house, 56. And for a rising, and for a scab, and for a bright spot. 57. To teach when it is unclean, and when it is clean: this is the law of leprosy.

This is the conclusion of this law concerning the leprosy: There is no repetition of it in Deuteronomy, only a general memorandum given, Deut. xxiv. 8. *Take heed in the plague of leprosy.* We may see in this law, 1. The gracious care God took of his people Israel, for to them only this law pertained, and not to the Gentiles. When Naaman the Syrian was cured of his leprosy, he was not bidden to shew himself to the priest, though he was cured in Jordan, as the Jews that were cured by our Saviour were. Thus they who are entrusted with the key of discipline in the church, judge them only *that are within*; but *them that are without God judgeth*, 1 Cor. v. 12, 13. 2. The religious care we ought to take of our selves, to keep our minds from the dominion of all sinful affections and dispositions, which are both their disease, and their defilement, that we may be fit for the service of God. We ought also to avoid all bad company, and as much as may be to avoid coming within the danger of being infected by it. *Touch not the unclean thing, saith the Lord, and I will receive you*, 2 Cor. vi. 17.

C H A P. XV.

In this chapter we have laws concerning other ceremonial uncleanness contracted either by bodily disease like that of the leper, or

some natural incidents, and this either, 1. In men, ver. 1—18. Or, 2. In women, ver. 19—33. We need not be at all curious in explaining these antiquated laws, it is enough if we observe the general intendment; but we have need to be very cautious lest sin take occasion by the commandment to become more exceeding sinful; and exceeding sinful it is when lust is kindled by sparks of fire from God's altar. The case is bad with the soul when it is purified by that which should purify it.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses and to Aaron, saying, 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, when any man hath a running issue out of his flesh, because of his issue he is unclean. 3. And this shall be his uncleanness in his issue: whether his flesh run with his issue, or his flesh be stopped from his issue: it is his uncleanness. 4. Every bed whereon he lieth that hath the issue, is unclean: and every thing whereon he sitteth, shall be unclean. 5. And whosoever toucheth his bed, shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. 6. And he that sitteth on any thing whereon he sate that hath the issue, shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. 7. And he that toucheth the flesh of him that hath the issue, shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. 8. And if he that hath the issue spit upon him that is clean; then he shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. 9. And what saddle soever he rideth upon that hath the issue, shall be unclean. 10. And whosoever toucheth any thing that was under him, shall be unclean until the even: and he that beareth any of those things, shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. 11. And whomsoever he toucheth that hath the issue (and hath not rinsed his hands in water) he shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. 12. And the vessel of earth that he toucheth which hath the issue, shall be broken: and every vessel of wood shall be rinsed in water. 13. And when he that hath an issue is cleansed of his issue; then he shall number to himself seven days for his cleansing, and wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in running water, and shall be clean. 14. And on the eighth day he shall take to him two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, and come before the LORD unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and give them unto the priest. 15. And the priest shall offer them, the one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the LORD, for his issue. 16. And if any mans seed of copulation go out from him, then he shall wash all his flesh in water, and be unclean until the even. 17. And every garment and every skin whereon is the seed of copulation, shall be washed with water, and be unclean until the even. 18. The woman also with whom man shall lie with seed of copulation, they shall both bathe themselves in water, and be unclean until the even.

We have here the law concerning the ceremonial uncleanness that was contracted by running issues in men. It is called in the margin, ver. 2. *the running of the reins*: a very grievous and loathsome disease, which was, 1. usually the effect and consequent of wantonness and uncleanness, and a dissolute course of life, filling mens bones with the sins of their youth, and leaving them to mourn at the last, when all the pleasures of their wickedness are vanished and gone, and nothing remains but the pain and anguish of a rotten carcase, and a wounded conscience. And what fruit has the sinner then of those things whereof he has so much reason to be ashamed, Rom. vi. 21. As modesty is an ornament of grace to the head, and chains about the neck, so chastity is health to the navel, and marrow to the bones; but uncleanness is a wound and dishonour, the consumption of the flesh and the body, and a sin which is often its own punishment more than any other. 2. It was sometimes inflicted by the righteous hand of God for other sins, as appears by David's imprecation of a curse upon the family of Joab, for the murder of Abner, 2 Sam. iii. 29. *Let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or is a leper.* A vile disease for vile deserts.

Now whoever had this disease upon him, 1. He was himself unclean, ver. 2. He must not dare to come near the sanctuary, it was at his peril if he did, nor might he eat of the holy things. This signified the filthiness of sin, and of all the products of our corrupt nature, which render us odious to God's holiness, and utterly unfit for communion with him. Out of a pure heart well kept are the issues of life, Prov. iv. 23. but out of an unclean heart

heart comes that which is defiling, *Matt. xii. 34, 35.* 2. He made every person and thing unclean that he touched, or that touched him, *ver. 4, 12.* His bed, and his chair, and his saddle, and every thing that belonged to him, could not be touched without a ceremonial uncleanness contracted, which a man must remain conscious to himself of till sun-set; and from which he could not be cleansed, without washing his clothes, and bathing his flesh in water. This signified the contagion of sin, and the danger we are in of being polluted by conversing with those that are polluted, and the need we have with the utmost circumspection to *save our selves from this untoward generation.* 3. When he was cured of the disease, yet he could not be cleansed from the pollution without a sacrifice, for which he was to prepare himself by seven days expectation after he was perfectly clear from his distemper, and by bathing him in spring-waters, *ver. 13, 14, 15.* This signified the great gospel duties of faith and repentance, and the great gospel privileges of the application of Christ's blood to our souls for our justification, and his grace for our sanctification. God has promised to sprinkle clean water upon us, and to cleanse us from all our filthiness, and has appointed us by repentance to wash us, and make us clean: he has also provided a sacrifice of atonement, and requires us by faith to interest our selves in that sacrifice, for it is *the blood of Christ his son that cleanseth us from all sin*, and by which atonement is made for us that we may have admission into God's presence, and may partake of his favours.

19. ¶ And if a woman have an issue, and her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be put apart seven days: and whosoever toucheth her, shall be unclean until the even. 20. And every thing that she lieth upon in her separation, shall be unclean: every thing also that she sitteth upon, shall be unclean. 21. And whosoever toucheth her bed, shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. 22. And whosoever toucheth any thing that she sat upon, shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. 23. And if it be on her bed, or on any thing whereon she sitteth, when he toucheth it; he shall be unclean until the even. 24. And if any man lie with her at all, and her flowers be upon him, he shall be unclean seven days; and all the bed whereon he lieth, shall be unclean. 25. And if a woman have an issue of her blood many days, out of the time of her separation, or if it run beyond the time of her separation; all the days of the issue of her uncleanness shall be as the days of her separation: she shall be unclean. 26. Every bed whereon she lieth all the days of her issue, shall be unto her as the bed of her separation: and whatsoever she sitteth upon shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her separation. 27. And whosoever toucheth those things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. 28. But if she be cleansed of her issue, then she shall number to her self seven days, and after that she shall be clean. 29. And on the eighth day she shall take unto her two turtles, or two young pigeons, and bring them unto the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 30. And the priest shall offer the one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for her before the LORD, for the issue of her uncleanness. 31. Thus shall ye separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness; that they die not in their uncleanness, when they defile my tabernacle that is among them. 32. This is the law of him that hath an issue, and of him whose seed goeth from him, and is defiled therewith: 33. And of her that is sick of her flowers, and of him that hath an issue, of the man, and of the woman, and of him that lieth with her which is unclean.

This is concerning the ceremonial uncleanness which women lay under from their issues, both those that were regular and healthful, and according to the course of nature, *ver. 19, 24.* and those that were unseasonable, excessive, and the disease of the body; such was the bloody issue of that poor woman who was suddenly cured by touching the hem of Christ's garment, after she had lain twelve years under her distemper, and had spent her estate upon physicians and physick in vain. This made the woman that was afflicted with it unclean, *ver. 25.* and every thing she touched unclean, *ver. 26, 27.* And if she was cured, and found by seven days trial that she was perfectly free from her issue of blood, she was to be cleansed by the offering of two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, to make an atonement for her, *ver. 28, 29.* All wicked courses, particularly idolatries, are compared to the uncleanness of a removed woman, *Ezek. xxxvi. 17.* and in allusion

to this it is said of Jerusalem, *Lam. i. 9.* *Her filthiness is in her skirts*, so that (as it follows *ver. 17.*) she was shunned as a menstruous woman.

The reasons given for all these laws (which we are ready to think might very well have been spared) we have, *ver. 31.* *Thus shall ye separate the children of Israel* (for to them only and their servants and proselytes these laws pertained) *from their uncleanness*: that is, 1. By these laws they were taught their privilege and honour, that they were *purified unto God a peculiar people*, and were intended by the holy God for a kingdom of priests, an holy nation; for that was a defilement to them which was not so to others. 2. They were also taught their duty, which was to preserve the honour of their party, and to keep themselves from all sinful pollutions. It was easy for them to argue, that if those pollutions which were natural, unavoidable, involuntary, their affliction and not their sin, rendered them for the time so odious, that they were not fit for communion either with God or man, much more abominable and filthy were they, if they sinned against the light and law of nature, by drunkenness, adultery, fraud, and the like sins, which defile the very mind and conscience. And if these ceremonial pollutions could not be done away but by sacrifice and offering, something greater and much more valuable must be expected and depended upon, for the purifying of the soul from the uncleanness of sin.

(2.) Thus shall ye prevent their dying in their uncleanness, by the hand of God's justice, if while they were under any of these defilements they should come near the sanctuary. Note, It is a dangerous thing to die in our uncleanness; and it is our own fault if we do, since we have not only fair warning given us by God's law, against those things that will defile us, but also such gracious provision made by his gospel for our cleansing, if at any time we be defiled.

(3.) In all these laws there seems to be a special regard had to the honour of the tabernacle, which none must approach to in their uncleanness, that they *defile not my tabernacle*. Infinite wisdom took this course to preserve in the minds of that careless people a continual dread of, and veneration for, the manifestations of God's glory and presence among them in his sanctuary. Now the tabernacle of God was with men, familiarity would be apt to breed contempt, and therefore the law made so many things of frequent incidence to be ceremonial pollutions, and to incur an incapacity to draw near to the sanctuary, and to forbid it upon pain of death, that they never durst approach without great caution and reverence, and serious preparation, and fear of being found unfit. Thus they were taught never to draw near to God but with an awful, humble sense of their distance and danger, and an exact observance of every thing that was required in order to their safety and acceptance.

And what duty must we learn from all this? 1. Let us bless God that we are not under the yoke of these carnal ordinances; that as nothing can destroy us, so nothing can defile us but sin. They may now partake of the Lord's supper, who durst not then eat of the peace-offerings. And the defilement we contract by our sins of daily infirmity, we may be cleansed from in secret by the renewed acts of repentance and faith, without bathing in water, or bringing an offering to the door of the tabernacle. 2. Let us carefully abstain from all sin, as defiling to the conscience, and particularly from all fleshly lusts; *possessing our vessel in sanctification and honour, and not in the lusts of uncleanness*; which not only pollute the soul, but *war against it*, and threaten its ruin. 3. Let us all see how indispensibly necessary real holiness is to our future happiness, and get our hearts purified by faith that we may see God. Perhaps it is in allusion to these laws, that forbade the unclean to approach the sanctuary, that when it is asked, *Who shall stand in God's holy place?* it is answered, *He that hath clean hands and a pure heart*, *Psal. xxiv. 3, 4.* *for without holiness no man shall see the Lord.*

C H A P. XVI.

In this chapter we have the institution of the annual solemnity of the day of atonement, or expiation, which had as much gospel in it as perhaps any of the appointments of the ceremonial law, as appears by the reference the apostle hath to it, *Heb. ix. 7, &c.* We had before divers laws concerning sin-offerings for particular persons, and to be offered upon particular occasions; but this is concerning the stated sacrifice, in which the whole nation was interested. The whole service of the day is committed to the high priest. (1.) He must never come into the most holy place but upon this day, *ver. 1, 2.* (2.) He must come dressed in the linen garments, *ver. 4.* (3.) He must bring a sin-offering and a burnt-offering for himself, *ver. 3.* offer his sin-offering, *ver. 6—11.* then go within the vail with some of the blood of his sin-offering, burn incense, and sprinkle the blood before the mercy-seat, *ver. 12, 13, 14.* (4.) Two goats must be provided for the people, lots cast upon them, and, 1. One of them must be a sin-offering for the people, *ver. 5, 7, 8, 9.* and the blood of it must be sprinkled before the mercy-seat, *ver. 15, 16, 17.* And then some of the blood of both the sin-offerings must be sprinkled upon the altar, *ver. 18, 19.* 2. The other must be a scape-goat, *ver.*

ver. 10. *the sins of Israel must be confessed over him, and then he must be sent away into the wilderness, ver. 20, 21, 22. and he that brought him away must be ceremonially unclean. (5.) The burnt-offerings were then to be offered, the fat of the sin-offerings burnt on the altar, and their flesh burnt without the camp, ver. 23, 24, 25, 27, 28. (6.) The people were to observe the day religiously, by a holy rest, and holy mourning for sin; and this was to be a statute for ever, ver. 29—34.*

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the Lord, and died: 2. And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail, before the mercy-seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy-seat. 3. Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering. 4. He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with the linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on.

Here is, 1. The date of this law concerning the day of atonement: It was *after the death of the two sons of Aaron*, ver. 1. which we read of *chap. x. 1.* (1.) Lest Aaron should fear that any remaining guilt of that sin should cleave to his family, or (seeing the priests were so apt to offend) that some after-sin of his other sons should be the ruin of his family, he is directed how to *make atonement for his house*, that it might keep in with God; for the atonement for it would be the establishment of it, and preserve the entail of the blessing upon it. (2.) The priests being warned by the death of Nadab and Abihu to approach to God with reverence and godly fear, otherwise they came at their peril, directions are here given how the nearest approach might be made; not only without peril, but to unspeakable advantage and comfort, if the directions were observed. When they were cut off for an undue approach, the rest must not say, then we will not draw near at all, but then we will do it by rule. They died for their sin, therefore God graciously provides for the rest that they die not. Thus God's judgments on some should be instructions to others.

2. The design of this law. One intention of it was to preserve a veneration for the most holy place, within the vail, where the *Shechinah* or divine glory was pleased to dwell between the cherubims, ver. 2. *Speak unto Aaron, that he come not at all times into the holy place.* Before the vail some of the priests came every day to burn incense upon the golden altar, but within the vail none must ever come but the high priest only, and he but on one day in the year, and with great ceremony and caution. That place where God manifested his special presence must not be made common. If none must come into the presence-chamber of an earthly king uncalled, no not the queen her self, upon pain of death, *Ezra. iv. 11.* was it not requisite that the same sacred respect should be paid to the King of kings? But see what a blessed change is made by the gospel of Christ; all good christians have now *boldness to enter into the holiest, through the vail*, every day, *Heb. x. 19, 20.* and we come boldly, not as Aaron must, with fear and trembling, to the *throne of grace*, or mercy-seat, *Heb. iv. 16.* While the manifestations of God's presence and grace were sensible, it was requisite they should thus be confined, and upon the reserve, because the objects of sense, the more familiar they are made, the less awful or delightful they become; but now they are purely spiritual it is otherwise; for the objects of faith, the more they are conversed with, the more doth there appear of their greatness and goodness: now therefore we are welcome to come at all times into the *holy place not made with hands*, for we are made to *sit together with Christ in heavenly places* by faith, *Ephes. ii. 6.* Then Aaron must not come near at all times lest he die, we now must come near at all times that we may live: it is distance only that is our death. Then God appeared in the cloud upon the mercy-seat, but now with open face we behold not in a dark cloud, but in a clear glass, the glory of the Lord, *2 Cor. iii. 18.*

3. The person to whom the work of this day was committed; and that was the high priest only, ver. 3. *Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place.* He was to do all himself upon the day of atonement; only there was a second provided to be his substitute or supporter, in case any thing should befall him, either of sickness or ceremonial uncleanness, that he could not perform the service of the day. All christians are spiritual priests, but Christ only is the high priest, and he alone it is that makes atonement, nor needed he either assistant or substitute.

4. The attire of the high priest in this service: he was not to be dressed up in his rich garments that were peculiar to himself; he was not to put on the ephod, with the precious stones in it, but only the linen clothes, which he wore in common with the inferior priests, ver. 4. That meaner dress did best become him

on this day of humiliation; and being thinner and lighter, he would in them be more expedite for the work and service of the day, which was all to go through his hands. Christ our high priest made atonement for sin in our nature; not in the robes of his own peculiar glory, but the linen garments of our mortality, clean indeed, but mean.

5. And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel, two kids of the goats for a sin-offering, and one ram for a burnt-offering. 6. And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin-offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house. 7. And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 8. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scape-goat. 9. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD's lot fell, and offer him for a sin-offering. 10. But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scape-goat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scape-goat into the wilderness. 11. And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin-offering which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin-offering, which is for himself. 12. And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense, beaten small, and bring it within the vail. 13. And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy-seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not. 14. And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy-seat, eastward: and before the mercy-seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times.

The Jewish writers say, that for seven days before the day of expiation the high priest was to retire from his own house, and to dwell in a chamber of the temple, that he might prepare himself for the service of this great day. During those seven days, he himself did the work of the inferior priests about the sacrifices, incense, &c. that he might have his hand in for this day: he must have the institution read to him again and again, that he might be fully apprised of the whole method. (1.) He was to begin the service of the day very early with the usual morning sacrifice, after he had first washed his whole body before he dressed him, and his hands and feet again after. He then burned the daily incense, dressed the lamps, and offered the extraordinary sacrifice appointed for this day, not here, but *Numb. xxix. 8.* a bullock, a ram, and seven lambs, all for burnt-offerings. This he is supposed to have done in his high priest's garments. (2.) He must now put off his rich robes, bathe himself, put on the linen garments, and must present unto the Lord his own bullock, which was to be a sin-offering for himself and his house, ver. 6. The bullock was set between the temple and the altar, and the offering of him mentioned in this verse was the making of a solemn confession of his sins, and the sins of his house, earnestly praying for the forgiveness of them, and this with his hands on the head of the bullock. (3.) He must then cast lots upon the two goats, which were to make (both together) one sin-offering for the congregation. One of these goats must be slain, in token of a satisfaction to be made to God's justice for sin, the other must be sent away, in token of the remission or dismissal of sin by the mercy of God. Both must be presented together to God, ver. 7. before the lot was cast upon them, and afterwards the scape-goat by it self, ver. 10. Some think goats were chosen for the sin-offering, because by the unfavourableness of their smell the offensiveness of sin is represented: others think, because it was said that the demons which the heathens then worshipped, often appeared to their worshippers in the form of goats; God therefore obliged his people to sacrifice goats, that they might never be tempted to sacrifice to goats. (4.) The next thing to be done was to kill the bullock for the sin-offering, for himself and his house, ver. 11. Now, say the Jews, he must again put his hands on the head of the bullock, and repeat the confession and supplication he had before made, and kill the bullock with his own hands, to make atonement for himself first, (for how could he make reconciliation for the sins of the people, till he was himself first reconciled?) and for his house, not only his own family, but all the priests, which are called the *house of Aaron*, *Psal. cxxxv. 19.* This charity must begin at home, though it must not end there. The bullock being killed, he left one of the priests to stir the blood, that it might not thicken, and then (5.) He took a censer of burning coals (that would not smoke) in one hand, and a dish full of the sweet incense in the other, and then went into the holy of holies through the vail, went up towards the ark, set the coals down upon the floor,

floor, scattered the incense upon them, so that the room was presently filled with smoke. The Jews say, he was to go in sideways, that he might not look directly upon the ark, where the divine glory was, till it was covered with smoke; and then he must come out backward, out of reverence to the divine Majesty; and after a short prayer he was to hasten out of the sanctuary to shew himself to the people, that they might not suspect that he had misbehaved himself, and died before the Lord. (6.) He then fetched the blood of the bullock from the priest whom he had left stirring it, and took that in with him the second time into the holy of holies, which was now filled with the smoke of the incense, and sprinkled with his finger of that blood upon, or rather towards the mercy-seat, once over against the top of it, and then seven times towards the lower part of it, *ver.* 14. But the drops of blood (as the Jews expound it) all fell upon the ground, and none touched the mercy-seat. Having done this, he came out of the most holy place, set the basin of blood down in the sanctuary, and went out.

15. Then shall he kill the goat of the sin-offering that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat. 16. And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them, in the midst of their uncleanness. 17. And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel. 18. And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the LORD, and make an atonement for it, and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. 19. And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.

When the priest was come out from sprinkling the blood of the bullock before the mercy-seat, (1.) He must next kill the goat which was the sin-offering for the people, *ver.* 15. and go the third time into the holy of holies, to sprinkle the blood of the goat, as he had done that of the bullock; and thus he was to make atonement for the holy place, *ver.* 16. i. e. whereas the people by their sins had provoked God to take away those tokens of his favourable presence with them, and rendered even that holy place unfit to be the habitation of the holy God, atonement was hereby made for sin, that God being reconciled to them, might continue with them. (2.) He must then do the same for the outward part of the tabernacle, that he had done for the inner room, by sprinkling the blood of the bullock first, and then of the goat, without the vail, there where the table and incense altar stood, eight times each as before. The reason intimated is, *because the tabernacle remained among them in the midst of their uncleanness*, *ver.* 16. God would hereby shew them how much their hearts needed to be purified, when even the tabernacle only by standing in the midst of such an impure and sinful people needed this expiation; and also, that even their devotions and religious performances had much amiss in them, for which it was necessary that atonement should be made. During this solemnity none of the inferior priests must come into the tabernacle, *ver.* 17. but by standing without must own themselves unworthy and unfit to minister there, because their follies and defects, and manifold impurities in their ministry, had made this expiation of the tabernacle necessary. (3.) He must then put some of the blood, both of the bullock and of the goat mixed together, upon the horns of the altar that is before the Lord, *ver.* 18, 19. It is certain the altar of incense had this blood put upon it, for so it is expressly ordered, *Exod.* xxx. 10. But some think this directs the high priest to the altar of burnt-offerings, for that also is here called the altar before the Lord, *ver.* 12. because he is said to go out to it, and because it may be presumed that that also had need of an expiation; for to that the gifts and offerings of the children of Israel were all brought, from whose uncleanness the altar is here said to be hallowed.

20. ¶ And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: 21. And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. 22. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities,

unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness. 23. And Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall put off the linen garments, which he put on when he went into the holy place; and shall leave them there. 24. And he shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and offer his burnt-offering, and the burnt-offering of the people, and make an atonement for himself, and for the people. 25. And the fat of the sin-offering shall he burn upon the altar. 26. And he that let go the goat for the scape-goat, shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward come into the camp. 27. And the bullock for the sin-offering, and the goat for the sin-offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall one carry forth without the camp, and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung. 28. And he that burneth them, shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp.

The high priest having presented unto the Lord the expiatory sacrifices, by the sprinkling of their blood, the remainder of which it is probable he poured out at the foot of the brazen altar, 1. He is next to confess the sins of Israel, with both his hands upon the head of the scape-goat, *ver.* 20, 21. And whenever hands were imposed upon the head of any sacrifice, it was always done with confession, according as the nature of the sacrifice was; and this being a sin-offering, it must be a confession of sin. In the latter and more degenerate ages of the Jewish church, they had a set form of confession prepared for the high priest, but God here prescribed none; for it might be supposed that the high priest was so well acquainted with the state of the people, and had such a tender concern for them, that he needed not any form. The confession must be as particular as he could make it, not only of all the iniquities of the children of Israel, but all their transgressions in all their sins; in one sin there may be many transgressions from the several aggravating circumstances of it: and in our confessions we should take notice of them; and not only say *I have sinned*, but with Achan, Thus and thus have I done. By this confession he must put the sins of Israel upon the head of the goat, i. e. acting faith upon the divine appointment, which constituted such a translation, he must transfer the punishment incurred from the sinners to the sacrifice; which had been but a jest, nay, an affront to God, if he himself had not ordained it. 2. The goat was then to be sent away immediately by the hand of a fit person, pitched upon for the purpose, into a wilderness, a land not inhabited; and God allowed them to make this construction of it, that the sending away of the goat was the sending away of their sins, by a free and full remission, *ver.* 22. *He shall bear upon him all their iniquities.* The losing of the goat was a sign to them, that the sins of Israel should be sought for and not found, *Jer.* l. 20. The latter Jews had a custom to tie one shred of scarlet cloth to the horns of the goat, and another to the gate of the temple, or to the top of the rock where the goat was lost, and they concluded that if it turned white, as they say it usually did, the sins of Israel were forgiven, as it is written, *Though your sins have been as scarlet, they shall be as wool*: And they add, that for forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, the scarlet cloth never changed colour at all; which is a fair confession, that having rejected the substance, the shadow stood them in no stead. The high priest must then put off his linen garments in the tabernacle, and leave them there, the Jews say, never to be worn more by himself or any other, for they made new ones every year; and he must bathe himself in water, put on his rich clothes, and then offer both his own and the peoples burnt-offerings, *ver.* 23, 24. When we have the comfort of our pardon, God must have the glory of it. If we have the benefit of the sacrifice of atonement, we must not grudge the sacrifices of acknowledgment. And it should seem the burning of the fat of the sin-offering was deferred till now, *ver.* 25. that it might be consumed with the burnt-offerings. 4. The flesh of both those sin-offerings, whose blood was taken within the vail was to be all burnt, not upon the altar, but at a distance without the camp, to signify both our putting away of sin by true repentance, and the spirit of burning, and God's putting it away by a full remission, so that it shall never rise up in judgment against us. 5. He that took the scape-goat into the wilderness, and they that burned the sin-offering, were to be looked upon as ceremonially unclean, and must not come into the camp till they had washed their clothes, and bathed their flesh in water. Which signified the defiling nature of sin; even the sacrifice which was but made sin was defiling: also, the imperfection of the legal sacrifices; they were so far from taking away sin, that even they left some stain upon those that touched them. Lastly, When all this was done, the high priest went again into the most holy place to fetch his censor, and so returned to his own house with joy, because he had done his duty, and died not.

29. ¶ And this shall be a statute for ever unto you : that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all ; whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that journeyeth among you. 30. For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. 31. It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you ; and ye shall afflict your souls by a statute for ever : 32. And the priest whom he shall anoint, and whom he shall consecrate, to minister in the priest's office in his father's stead, shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen clothes, even the holy garments. 33. And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar : and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation. 34. And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year. And he did as the LORD commanded Moses.

Here is, 1. The day appointed for this solemnity : It must be observed yearly on *the tenth day of the seventh month*, ver. 29. The seventh month had been reckoned the first month, till God appointed that the month in which the children of Israel came out of Egypt, should from thenceforward be accounted and called the first month. Some have fancied that this tenth day of the seventh month was the day of the year on which our first parents fell, and that it was kept as a fast in remembrance of that. Dr. Lightfoot computes that this was the day on which Moses came the last time down from the mount, when he brought with him the renewed tables, and the assurances of God's being fully reconciled to Israel, and his face shone : that day must be a day of atonement throughout their generations ; for the remembrance of God's forgiving them their sin about the golden calf, might encourage them to hope, that upon their repentance he would forgive them all trespasses. 2. The duty of the people on this day. (1.) They must rest from all their labours ; *It shall be a sabbath of rest*, ver. 31. The work of the day was it self enough, and a good day's work if it was done well, therefore they must do no other work at all. The work of humiliation for sin requires such a close application of mind, and such a fixed engagement of the whole man, as will not allow a diversion to any other work. The day of atonement seems to be that sabbath spoken of by the prophet, *Isa. lviii. 13.* for it is the same with the fast spoken of in the verses before. (2.) They must afflict their souls. They must refrain from all bodily refreshments and delights, in token of inward humiliation and contrition of soul for their sins. They all fasted on this day from food, (except the sick and children) and laid aside their ornaments, and did anoint themselves as Daniel. *chap. x. 3, 12.* David chastened his soul with fasting, *Psal. xxxv. 13.* And it signified the mortifying of sin, and turning from it, *loosing the bands of wickedness*, *Isa. lviii. 6, 7.* The Jewish doctors advised that they should not on that day read those portions of scripture, which were proper to affect them with delight and joy, because it was a day to afflict their souls. 3. The perpetuity of this institution ; *It shall be a statute for ever*, ver. 29, 34. It must not be intermitted any year, nor ever let fall till that constitution should be dissolved, and the type should be superseded by the antitype. As long as we are continually sinning, we must be continually repenting, and receiving the atonement. The law of afflicting our souls for sin, is a statute for ever, which will continue in force till we come there where all tears, even those of repentance, will be wiped from our eyes. The apostle observes it as an evidence of the insufficiency of the legal sacrifices to take away sin, and purge the conscience from it, that in them there was a *remembrance made of sin every year*, upon the day of atonement, *Heb. x. 1, 2, 3.* The annual repetition of the sacrifices shewed that there was in them only a faint and feeble effort towards making atonement, it could be done effectually only by *offering up of the body of Christ once for all*, and that once was sufficient ; that sacrifice needed not to be repeated.

Let us therefore see what there was of gospel in all this. (1.) Here is typified the two great gospel privileges, of the remission of sin, and access to God, both which we owe to the mediation of our Lord Jesus.

Here then let us see, 1. The expiation of guilt which Christ made for us. He is himself both the maker and the matter of the atonement ; for he is, (1.) the priest, the high priest, that *makes reconciliation for the sins of the people*, *Heb. ii. 17.* He, and none but he, is *par negotio*, fit for the work, and worthy of the honour : he is appointed by the Father to do it, who sanctified him, and sent him into the world for this purpose, that *God might in him reconcile the world to himself*. He undertook it, and for our sakes sanctified himself, and set himself apart for it, *John xvii. 19.* The high priests's frequent bathing himself on this day, and performing the service of it in fine linen clean and white, signified the holiness of the Lord Jesus ; his perfect purity from all sin, and his being

beautified and adorned with all grace. No man was to be with the high priest when he made atonement, *ver. 17.* for our Lord Jesus was to *tread the wine-press alone*, and of the people there must be *none with him*, *Isa. lxiii. 3.* therefore when he entered upon his sufferings, *all his disciples forsook him and fled* ; for if any of them had been taken and put to death with him, it would have looked as if they had assisted in making the atonement : none but thieves, concerning whom there could be no such suspicion, must suffer with him. And observe what the extent of the atonement was, which the high priest made ; it was *for the holy sanctuary, for the tabernacle, for the altar, for the priests, and for all the people*, ver. 33. Christ's satisfaction is that which atones for the sins both of ministers and people, the *iniquities of our holy* (and our unholy) *things* ; the title we have to the privilege of ordinances, our comfort in them, and benefit by them, is all owing to the atonement Christ made. But whereas the atonement which the high priest made pertained only to the congregation of Israel, Christ is the propitiation, not for our sins only, that are Jews, but for the sins of the whole Gentile world. And in this also Christ infinitely excelled Aaron, that Aaron needed to offer sacrifice for his own sin first, which he was to make confession of upon the head of his sin-offering ; but our Lord Jesus had no sin of his own to answer for ; *such a high priest became us*, *Heb. vii. 25, 26.* And therefore, when he was baptized in Jordan, whereas others *stood in the water confessing their sins*, *Matt. iii. 6.* he *went up straightway out of the water*, ver. 16. having no sins to confess. (2.) As he is the high priest, so he is the sacrifice with which atonement is made ; for he is all in all in our reconciliation to God. Thus he was figured by the two goats, which both made one offering : the slain goat was a type of Christ dying for our sins ; the scape-goat a type of Christ rising again for our justification. It was directed by lot, the disposal whereof was of the Lord, which goat should be slain ; for Christ was delivered *by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*. (1.) The atonement is said to be compleated by putting the sins of Israel upon the head of the goat : they deserved to have been abandoned and sent into a land of forgetfulness, but that punishment was here transferred to the goat that bore their sins ; with reference to which God is said to have laid upon our Lord Jesus (the substance of all these shadows) *the iniquity of us all*, *Isa. liii. 6.* And he is said to have *bore our sins*, even the punishment of them, *in his own body upon the tree*, *1 Pet. ii. 24.* Thus was he made sin for us, that is, a sacrifice for sin, *2 Cor. v. 21.* He suffered and died not only for our good, but in our stead, and was forsaken, and seemed to be forgotten for a time, that we might not be forsaken and forgotten for ever. Some learned men have computed that our Lord Jesus was baptized of John in Jordan upon the tenth day of the seventh month, which was the very day of atonement ; then he entered upon his office, as mediator, and was immediately *driven of the Spirit into the wilderness*, a land not inhabited. (2.) The consequent of this was, that *all the iniquities of Israel were carried into a land of forgetfulness*. Thus Christ, the Lamb of God, *takes away the sin of the world*, by taking it upon himself, *John i. 29.* And when God forgives sin, he is said to remember it no more, *Heb. viii. 13.* to *cast it behind his back*, *Isa. xxxviii. 17.* into the depths of the sea, *Mich. vii. 19.* and to separate it *as far as the east is from the west*, *Psal. ciii. 12.*

2. The entrance into heaven, which Christ made for us, is here typified by the high priest's entrance into the most holy place. This the apostle hath expounded, *Heb. ix. 7, 8.* and he shews, (1.) That heaven is the holiest of all, but not of that building, and that the way into it by faith, hope, and prayer, through a mediator, was not then so clearly manifested as it is to us now by the gospel. (2.) That Christ our high priest entered into heaven at his ascension once for all, and as a publick person, in the name of all his spiritual Israel, and through the vail of his flesh, which was rent for that purpose, *Heb. x. 20.* (3.) That he entered by *his own blood*, *Heb. ix. 12.* taking with him to heaven the virtues of the sacrifice he offered on earth, and so sprinkling his blood as it were before the mercy-seat, where it speaks better things than the blood of bulls and goats could do. Hence he is said to appear in the midst of the throne as *a lamb that had been slain*, *Rev. v. 6.* And though he had no sin of his own to expiate, yet it was by his own merit that he obtained for himself a restoration to his own ancient glory, *John xvii. 4, 5.* as well as an eternal redemption for us, *Heb. ix. 12.* (4.) The high priest in the holy place burned incense, which typified the intercession that Christ ever lives to make for us within the vail, in the virtue of his satisfaction. And we could not expect to live, no not before the mercy-seat, if it were not covered with the cloud of this incense. Meer mercy it self will not save us, without the interposal of a mediator. The intercession of Christ is there set forth before God as incense, as this incense. And as the high priest interceded for himself first, then for his household, and then for all Israel, so our Lord Jesus, in the 17th of St. John (which was a specimen of the intercession he makes in heaven) recommended himself first to his Father, then his disciples, who were his household, and then all that should believe on him through their word, as all Israel ; and having thus directed the uses and intentions of his offering, he was immediately seized and crucified, pursuant to these intentions.

(5.) Herein

floor, scattered the incense upon them, so that the room was presently filled with smoke. The Jews say, he was to go in sideways, that he might not look directly upon the ark, where the divine glory was, till it was covered with smoke; and then he must come out backward, out of reverence to the divine Majesty; and after a short prayer he was to hasten out of the sanctuary to shew himself to the people, that they might not suspect that he had misbehaved himself, and died before the Lord. (6.) He then fetched the blood of the bullock from the priest whom he had left stirring it, and took that in with him the second time into the holy of holies, which was now filled with the smoke of the incense, and sprinkled with his finger of that blood upon, or rather towards the mercy-seat, once over against the top of it, and then seven times towards the lower part of it, *ver.* 14. But the drops of blood (as the Jews expound it) all fell upon the ground, and none touched the mercy-seat. Having done this, he came out of the most holy place, set the basin of blood down in the sanctuary, and went out.

15. Then shall he kill the goat of the sin-offering that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat. 16. And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them, in the midst of their uncleanness. 17. And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel. 18. And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the LORD, and make an atonement for it, and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. 19. And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.

When the priest was come out from sprinkling the blood of the bullock before the mercy-seat, (1.) He must next kill the goat which was the sin-offering for the people, *ver.* 15. and go the third time into the holy of holies, to sprinkle the blood of the goat, as he had done that of the bullock; and thus he was to make atonement for the holy place, *ver.* 16. *i. e.* whereas the people by their sins had provoked God to take away those tokens of his favourable presence with them, and rendered even that holy place unfit to be the habitation of the holy God, atonement was hereby made for sin, that God being reconciled to them, might continue with them. (2.) He must then do the same for the outward part of the tabernacle, that he had done for the inner room, by sprinkling the blood of the bullock first, and then of the goat, without the vail, there where the table and incense altar stood, eight times each as before. The reason intimated is, *because the tabernacle remained among them in the midst of their uncleanness*, *ver.* 16. God would hereby shew them how much their hearts needed to be purified, when even the tabernacle only by standing in the midst of such an impure and sinful people needed this expiation; and also, that even their devotions and religious performances had much amiss in them, for which it was necessary that atonement should be made. During this solemnity none of the inferior priests must come into the tabernacle, *ver.* 17. but by standing without must own themselves unworthy and unfit to minister there, because their follies and defects, and manifold impurities in their ministry, had made this expiation of the tabernacle necessary. (3.) He must then put some of the blood, both of the bullock and of the goat mixed together, upon the horns of the altar that is before the Lord, *ver.* 18, 19. It is certain the altar of incense had this blood put upon it, for so it is expressly ordered, *Exod.* xxx. 10. But some think this directs the high priest to the altar of burnt-offerings, for that also is here called the altar before the Lord, *ver.* 12. because he is said to go out to it, and because it may be presumed that that also had need of an expiation; for to that the gifts and offerings of the children of Israel were all brought, from whose uncleanness the altar is here said to be hallowed.

20. ¶ And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: 21. And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. 22. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities,

unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness. 23. And Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall put off the linen garments, which he put on when he went into the holy place; and shall leave them there. 24. And he shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and offer his burnt-offering, and the burnt-offering of the people, and make an atonement for himself, and for the people. 25. And the fat of the sin-offering shall he burn upon the altar. 26. And he that let go the goat for the scape-goat, shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward come into the camp. 27. And the bullock for the sin-offering, and the goat for the sin-offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall one carry forth without the camp, and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung. 28. And he that burneth them, shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp.

The high priest having presented unto the Lord the expiatory sacrifices, by the sprinkling of their blood, the remainder of which it is probable he poured out at the foot of the brazen altar, 1. He is next to confess the sins of Israel, with both his hands upon the head of the scape-goat, *ver.* 20, 21. And whenever hands were imposed upon the head of any sacrifice, it was always done with confession, according as the nature of the sacrifice was; and this being a sin-offering, it must be a confession of sin. In the latter and more degenerate ages of the Jewish church, they had a set form of confession prepared for the high priest, but God here prescribed none; for it might be supposed that the high priest was so well acquainted with the state of the people, and had such a tender concern for them, that he needed not any form. The confession must be as particular as he could make it, not only of all the iniquities of the children of Israel, but all their transgressions in all their sins; in one sin there may be many transgressions from the several aggravating circumstances of it: and in our confessions we should take notice of them; and not only say *I have sinned*, but with Achan, Thus and thus have I done. By this confession he must put the sins of Israel upon the head of the goat, *i. e.* acting faith upon the divine appointment, which constituted such a translation, he must transfer the punishment incurred from the sinners to the sacrifice; which had been but a jest, nay, an affront to God, if he himself had not ordained it. 2. The goat was then to be sent away immediately by the hand of a fit person, pitched upon for the purpose, into a wilderness, a land not inhabited; and God allowed them to make this construction of it, that the sending away of the goat was the sending away of their sins, by a free and full remission, *ver.* 22. *He shall bear upon him all their iniquities.* The losing of the goat was a sign to them, that the sins of Israel should be sought for and not found, *Jer.* l. 20. The latter Jews had a custom to tie one shred of scarlet cloth to the horns of the goat, and another to the gate of the temple, or to the top of the rock where the goat was loit, and they concluded that if it turned white, as they say it usually did, the sins of Israel were forgiven, as it is written, *Though your sins have been as scarlet, they shall be as wool:* And they add, that for forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, the scarlet cloth never changed colour at all; which is a fair confession, that having rejected the substance, the shadow stood them in no stead. The high priest must then put off his linen garments in the tabernacle, and leave them there, the Jews say, never to be worn more by himself or any other, for they made new ones every year; and he must bathe himself in water, put on his rich clothes, and then offer both his own and the peoples burnt-offerings, *ver.* 23, 24. When we have the comfort of our pardon, God must have the glory of it. If we have the benefit of the sacrifice of atonement, we must not grudge the sacrifices of acknowledgment. And it should seem the burning of the fat of the sin-offering was deferred till now, *ver.* 25. that it might be consumed with the burnt-offerings. 4. The flesh of both those sin-offerings, whose blood was taken within the vail was to be all burnt, not upon the altar, but at a distance without the camp, to signify both our putting away of sin by true repentance, and the spirit of burning, and God's putting it away by a full remission, so that it shall never rise up in judgment against us. 5. He that took the scape-goat into the wilderness, and they that burned the sin-offering, were to be looked upon as ceremonially unclean, and must not come into the camp till they had washed their clothes, and bathed their flesh in water. Which signified the defiling nature of sin; even the sacrifice which was but made sin was defiling: also, the imperfection of the legal sacrifices; they were so far from taking away sin, that even they left some stain upon those that touched them. Lastly, When all this was done, the high priest went again into the most holy place to fetch his censor, and so returned to his own house with joy, because he had done his duty, and died not.

29. ¶ And this shall be a statute for ever unto you : that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all ; whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you. 30. For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. 31. It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you ; and ye shall afflict your souls by a statute for ever : 32. And the priest whom he shall anoint, and whom he shall consecrate, to minister in the priest's office in his father's stead, shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen clothes, even the holy garments. 33. And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar : and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation. 34. And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year. And he did as the LORD commanded Moses.

Here is, 1. The day appointed for this solemnity : It must be observed yearly on the tenth day of the seventh month, ver. 29. The seventh month had been reckoned the first month, till God appointed that the month in which the children of Israel came out of Egypt, should from thenceforward be accounted and called the first month. Some have fancied that this tenth day of the seventh month was the day of the year on which our first parents fell, and that it was kept as a fast in remembrance of that. Dr. Lightfoot computes that this was the day on which Moses came the last time down from the mount, when he brought with him the renewed tables, and the assurances of God's being fully reconciled to Israel, and his face shone : that day must be a day of atonement throughout their generations ; for the remembrance of God's forgiving them their sin about the golden calf, might encourage them to hope, that upon their repentance he would forgive them all trespasses. 2. The duty of the people on this day. (1.) They must rest from all their labours ; *It shall be a sabbath of rest*, ver. 31. The work of the day was it self enough, and a good day's work if it was done well, therefore they must do no other work at all. The work of humiliation for sin requires such a close application of mind, and such a fixed engagement of the whole man, as will not allow a diversion to any other work. The day of atonement seems to be that sabbath spoken of by the prophet, *Isa. lviii. 13.* for it is the same with the fast spoken of in the verses before. (2.) They must afflict their souls. They must refrain from all bodily refreshments and delights, in token of inward humiliation and contrition of soul for their sins. They all fasted on this day from food, (except the sick and children) and laid aside their ornaments, and did anoint themselves as Daniel. *chap. x. 3, 12.* David chastened his soul with fasting, *Psal. xxxv. 13.* And it signified the mortifying of sin, and turning from it, *loosing the bands of wickedness*, *Isa. lviii. 6, 7.* The Jewish doctors advised that they should not on that day read those portions of scripture, which were proper to affect them with delight and joy, because it was a day to afflict their souls. 3. The perpetuity of this institution ; *It shall be a statute for ever*, ver. 29, 34. It must not be intermitted any year, nor ever let fall till that constitution should be dissolved, and the type should be superseded by the antitype. As long as we are continually sinning, we must be continually repenting, and receiving the atonement. The law of afflicting our souls for sin, is a statute for ever, which will continue in force till we come there where all tears, even those of repentance, will be wiped from our eyes. The apostle observes it as an evidence of the insufficiency of the legal sacrifices to take away sin, and purge the conscience from it, that in them there was a remembrance made of sin every year, upon the day of atonement, *Heb. x. 1, 2, 3.* The annual repetition of the sacrifices shewed that there was in them only a faint and feeble effort towards making atonement, it could be done effectually only by offering up of the body of Christ once for all, and that once was sufficient ; that sacrifice needed not to be repeated.

Let us therefore see what there was of gospel in all this. (1.) Here is typified the two great gospel privileges, of the remission of sin, and access to God, both which we owe to the mediation of our Lord Jesus.

Here then let us see, 1. The expiation of guilt which Christ made for us. He is himself both the maker and the matter of the atonement ; for he is, (1.) the priest, the high priest, that makes reconciliation for the sins of the people, *Heb. ii. 17.* He, and none but he, is *par negotio*, fit for the work, and worthy of the honour : he is appointed by the Father to do it, who sanctified him, and sent him into the world for this purpose ; that God might in him reconcile the world to himself. He undertook it, and for our sakes sanctified himself, and set himself apart for it, *John xvii. 19.* The high priests's frequent bathing himself on this day, and performing the service of it in fine linen clean and white, signified the holiness of the Lord Jesus ; his perfect purity from all sin, and his being

beautified and adorned with all grace. No man was to be with the high priest when he made atonement, ver. 17. for our Lord Jesus was to tread the wine-press alone, and of the people there must be none with him, *Isa. lxiii. 3.* therefore when he entered upon his sufferings, all his disciples forsook him and fled ; for if any of them had been taken and put to death with him, it would have looked as if they had assisted in making the atonement : none but thieves, concerning whom there could be no such suspicion, must suffer with him. And observe what the extent of the atonement was, which the high priest made ; it was for the holy sanctuary, for the tabernacle, for the altar, for the priests, and for all the people, ver. 33. Christ's satisfaction is that which atones for the sins both of ministers and people, the iniquities of our holy (and our unholy) things ; the title we have to the privilege of ordinances, our comfort in them, and benefit by them, is all owing to the atonement Christ made. But whereas the atonement which the high priest made pertained only to the congregation of Israel, Christ is the propitiation, not for our sins only, that are Jews, but for the sins of the whole Gentile world. And in this also Christ infinitely excelled Aaron, that Aaron needed to offer sacrifice for his own sin first, which he was to make confession of upon the head of his sin-offering ; but our Lord Jesus had no sin of his own to answer for ; such a high priest became us, *Heb. vii. 25, 26.* And therefore, when he was baptized in Jordan, whereas others stood in the water confessing their sins, *Matt. iii. 6.* he went up straightway out of the water, ver. 16. having no sins to confess. (2.) As he is the high priest, so he is the sacrifice with which atonement is made ; for he is all in all in our reconciliation to God. Thus he was figured by the two goats, which both made one offering : the slain goat was a type of Christ dying for our sins ; the scape-goat a type of Christ rising again for our justification. It was directed by lot, the disposal whereof was of the Lord, which goat should be slain ; for Christ was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. (1.) The atonement is said to be completed by putting the sins of Israel upon the head of the goat : they deserved to have been abandoned and sent into a land of forgetfulness, but that punishment was here transferred to the goat that bore their sins ; with reference to which God is said to have laid upon our Lord Jesus (the substance of all these shadows) the iniquity of us all, *Isa. liii. 6.* And he is said to have born our sins, even the punishment of them, in his own body upon the tree, *1 Pet. ii. 24.* Thus was he made sin for us, that is, a sacrifice for sin, *2 Cor. v. 21.* He suffered and died not only for our good, but in our stead, and was forsaken, and seemed to be forgotten for a time, that we might not be forsaken and forgotten for ever. Some learned men have computed that our Lord Jesus was baptized of John in Jordan upon the tenth day of the seventh month, which was the very day of atonement ; then he entered upon his office, as mediator, and was immediately driven of the Spirit into the wilderness, a land not inhabited. (2.) The consequent of this was, that all the iniquities of Israel were carried into a land of forgetfulness. Thus Christ, the Lamb of God, takes away the sin of the world, by taking it upon himself, *John i. 29.* And when God forgives sin, he is said to remember it no more, *Heb. viii. 13.* to cast it behind his back, *Isa. xxxviii. 17.* into the depths of the sea, *Mich. vii. 19.* and to separate it as far as the east is from the west, *Psal. ciii. 12.*

2. The entrance into heaven, which Christ made for us, is here typified by the high priest's entrance into the most holy place. This the apostle hath expounded, *Heb. ix. 7, &c.* and he shews, (1.) That heaven is the holiest of all, but not of that building, and that the way into it by faith, hope, and prayer, through a mediator, was not then so clearly manifested as it is to us now by the gospel. (2.) That Christ our high priest entered into heaven at his ascension once for all, and as a publick person, in the name of all his spiritual Israel, and through the vail of his flesh, which was rent for that purpose, *Heb. x. 20.* (3.) That he entered by his own blood, *Heb. ix. 12.* taking with him to heaven the virtues of the sacrifice he offered on earth, and so sprinkling his blood as it were before the mercy-seat, where it speaks better things than the blood of bulls and goats could do. Hence he is said to appear in the midst of the throne as a lamb that had been slain, *Rev. v. 6.* And though he had no sin of his own to expiate, yet it was by his own merit that he obtained for himself a restoration to his own ancient glory, *John xvii. 4, 5.* as well as an eternal redemption for us, *Heb. ix. 12.* (4.) The high priest in the holy place burned incense, which typified the intercession that Christ ever lives to make for us within the vail, in the virtue of his satisfaction. And we could not expect to live, no not before the mercy-seat, if it were not covered with the cloud of this incense. Meer mercy it self will not save us, without the interposal of a mediator. The intercession of Christ is there set forth before God as incense, as this incense. And as the high priest interceded for himself first, then for his household, and then for all Israel, so our Lord Jesus, in the 17th of St. John (which was a specimen of the intercession he makes in heaven) recommended himself first to his Father, then his disciples, who were his household, and then all that should believe on him through their word, as all Israel ; and having thus directed the uses and intentions of his offering, he was immediately seized and crucified, pursuant to these intentions.

(5.) Herein

(5.) Herein the entry Christ made far exceeded Aaron's; that Aaron could not gain admission, no not for his own sons, into the most holy place; but our Lord Jesus has consecrated for us also a *new and living way into the holiest*, so that we also have *boldness to enter*, Heb. x. 19, 20. And (lastly) the high priest was to come out again, but our Lord Jesus ever lives, making intercession, and always appears in the presence of God for us, whither as the forerunner he is for us entered, and where as agent he doth for us reside.

(2.) Here is likewise typified the two great gospel duties of faith and repentance, by which we are qualified for the atonement, and come to be entitled to the benefit of it. (1.) By faith we must put our hands upon the head of the offering, relying on Christ as the Lord our righteousness, pleading his satisfaction, as that which was alone able to atone for our sins, and procure us a pardon; *Thou shalt answer, Lord, for me*. This is all I have to say for my self, *Christ has died, yea rather is risen again*; to his grace and government I entirely submit my self, and in him I receive the atonement, Rom. v. 11. (2.) By repentance we must afflict our souls; not only fasting for a time from the delights of the body, but inwardly sorrowing for our sins, and living a life of self-denial and mortification. We must also make a penitent confession of sin, and this with an eye to Christ whom we have pierced, and mourning because of him; and a hand of faith upon the atonement, assuring our selves, that *If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*. Lastly, In the year of jubilee, the trumpet which proclaimed the liberty, was ordered to be sounded in the close of the *day of atonement*, Lev. xxv. 9. For the remission of our debt, release from our bondage, and our return to our inheritance, is all owing to the mediation and intercession of Jesus Christ. By the atonement we obtain rest for our souls, and all the glorious liberties of the children of God.

C H A P. XVII.

After the law concerning the atonement to be made for all Israel, by the high priest, at the tabernacle, with the blood of bulls and goats; in this chapter we have two prohibitions necessary for the preservation of the honour of that atonement. 1. That no sacrifice should be offered by any other but the priests, nor anywhere but at the door of the tabernacle, and this upon pain of death, ver. 1—9. 2. That no blood should be eaten, and this under the same penalty, ver. 10—16.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Speak unto Aaron, and unto his sons, and unto all the children of Israel, and say unto them, This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded, saying, 3. What man soever there be of the house of Israel, that killeth an ox, or lamb, or goat in the camp, or that killeth it out of the camp, 4. And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer an offering unto the LORD, before the tabernacle of the LORD; blood shall be imputed unto that man, he hath shed blood, and that man shall be cut off from among his people: 5. To the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices, which they offer in the open field, even that they may bring them unto the LORD, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation unto the priest, and offer them for peace-offerings unto the LORD. 6. And the priest shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar of the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and burn the fat for a sweet savour unto the LORD. 7. And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a whoring: This shall be a statute for ever unto them throughout their generations. 8. ¶ And thou shalt say unto them, Whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers which sojourn among you, that offereth a burnt-offering or sacrifice, 9. And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer it unto the LORD, even that man shall be cut off from among his people.

This statute obliged all the people of Israel to bring all their sacrifices to God's altar, to be offered there. And as to this matter we must consider (1.) How it had stood before. 1. It was allowed to all people to build altars, and offer sacrifices to God where they pleased. Wherever Abraham had a tent he built an altar, and every master of a family was a priest to his own family, as Job, chap. i. 5. 2. This liberty had been an occasion of idolatry. When every man was his own priest, and had an altar of his own, by degrees, as they became vain in their imaginations, they invented Gods of their own, and offered their sacrifices unto *dæmons*, ver. 7. The word signifies rough or hairy goats, because it is probable in that shape the evil spirits often appeared to

them, to invite their sacrifices, and to signify their acceptance of them. For the devil, ever since he became a revolter from God, and a rebel against him, hath set up for a rival with him, and coveted to have divine honours paid him; he had the impudence to move it to our blessed Saviour, to *fall down and worship him*. The Israelites themselves had learnt in Egypt to sacrifice to *dæmons*. And some of them it should seem practised it even since the God of Israel had so gloriously appeared for them, and with them. They are said to go a whoring after these *dæmons*; for it was such a breach of their covenant with God, as adultery is of the marriage-covenant: and they were as strongly addicted to their idolatrous worships, and as hardly reclaimed from them, as those that have given themselves over to fornication, to *work all uncleanness with greediness*; and therefore it is with reference to this that God calls himself a jealous God. (2.) How this law settled it. 1. Some think that the children of Israel were by this law forbidden, while they were in the wilderness, to kill any beef, or mutton, or veal, or lamb, or goat, even for their common eating, but at the *door of the tabernacle*; where the blood and the fat were to be offered to God upon the altar, and the flesh returned back to the offering to be eaten as a peace-offering, according to the law. And the statute is so worded, ver. 3, 4. as to favour this opinion, for it speaks generally of killing any ox, or lamb, or goat. The learned Dr. Cudworth puts this sense upon it, and thinks, that while they had their tabernacle so near them in the midst of their camp, they eat no flesh but what had first been offered to God; but that when they were entering Canaan, this constitution was altered, Deut. xii. 21. and they were allowed to kill their beasts of the flock and herd at home, as well as the roe-buck and the hart; only thrice a year they were to see God at his tabernacle, and to eat and drink before him there. And it is probable in the wilderness they did not eat much flesh, but that of their peace-offerings, preserving what cattle they had for breed, against they came to Canaan; therefore they murmured for flesh, being weary of manna; and Moses on that occasion speaks, as if they were very sparing of the *flocks and the herds*, Numb. xi. 4, 22. yet it is hard to construe this as a temporary law, when it is expressly said to be a *statute for ever*, ver. 7. And therefore, 2. It should seem rather to forbid only the killing of beasts for sacrifice, any where but at God's altar. They must not offer sacrifice, as they had done, in the open field, ver. 5. no not to the true God, but it must be brought to the priest, to be offered on the altar of the Lord: and the mighty solemnity they had lately seen of consecrating both the priests and the altar, would serve for a good reason why they should confine themselves to both these, that God had so signally appointed and owned. This law obliged not only the Israelites themselves, but the proselytes or strangers that were circumcised and sojourn among them, who were in danger of retaining an affection to their old ways of worship. If any should transgress this law, and offer sacrifice any where but at the tabernacle, 1. The guilt was great; *blood shall be imputed to that man, he hath shed blood*, ver. 4. Though it was but a beast he had killed, yet killing it otherwise than God had appointed, he was looked upon as a murderer. It is by the divine grant that we have liberty to kill the inferior creatures, which we are not intitled to the benefit of, unless we submit to the limitations of it, which are, that it be not done either with cruelty, or with superstition, Gen. ix. 3, 4. Nor was there ever any greater abuse done to the inferior creatures, than when they were made either false Gods, or sacrifices to false Gods, which the apostle perhaps has special reference to, when he speaks of the vanity and bondage of corruption, which the creature was made subject to, Rom. viii. 20, 21. compare chap. i. 23, 25. Idolatrous sacrifices were looked upon not only as adultery, but as murder, he that *offereth them is as if he slew a man*, Isa. lxvi. 3. 2. The punishment should be severe, *That man shall be cut off from among his people*. Either the magistrate must do it, if it were manifest and notorious, or if not, God would take the work into his own hands, and the offender should be cut off by some immediate stroke of divine justice. The reasons why God thus strictly ordered all their sacrifices to be offered at one place, were, 1. For the preventing of idolatry and superstition: that sacrifices might be offered to God, and according to the rule, and without innovations, they must always be offered by the hands of the priests, who were servants in God's house, and under the eye of the high priest, who was ruler of the house, and took care to see every thing done according to God's ordinance. 2. For the securing of the honour of God's temple and altar; the peculiar dignity of which would be endangered, if they might offer their sacrifices any where else as well as there. 3. For the preserving of unity and brotherly love among the Israelites; that meeting all at one altar, as all the children of the family meet daily at one table, they might live and love as brethren, and be as one man of one mind in the Lord. 3. How this law was observed. (1.) While the Israelites kept their integrity, they had a tender and very jealous regard to this law, as appears by their zeal against the altar which was erected by the two tribes and a half, which they would by no means have left standing, if they had not been satisfied that it was never designed, nor should ever be used for sacrifice or offering, Josh. xxii. 12, &c. (2.) The breach of this law was for many ages the scandalous and incurable corruption of the Jewish church,

church, witness that complaint which so often occurs in the history even of the good kings, *Howbeit the high places were not taken away*; and it was an inlet to the grossest idolatries. (3.) Yet this law was in extraordinary cases dispensed with. Gideon's sacrifice, *Judg. vi. 26.* Manoah's, *Judg. xiii. 19.* Samuel's, *1 Sam. vii. 9. ix. 13. xi. 15.* David's, *2 Sam. xxiv. 18.* and Elijah's, *1 King. xviii. 23.* were accepted, though not offered at the usual place: but these were all either ordered by angels, or offered by prophets; and some think, that after the desolation of Shiloh, and before the building of the temple, while the ark and altar were unsettled, it was more allowable to offer sacrifice elsewhere. 4. How this matter stands now, and what use we are to make of this law. 1. It is certain, the spiritual sacrifices we are now to offer, are not confined to any one place. Our Saviour hath made this clear, *John iv. 21.* and the apostle, *1 Tim. ii. 8.* according to the prophecy, that *in every place incense should be offered*, *Mal. i. 11.* We have now no temple or altar that sanctifies the gift, nor doth the gospel unity lie in one place, but in one heart, and the unity of the Spirit. 2. Christ is our altar, and the true tabernacle, *Heb. ix. 11. xiii. 10.* in him God dwells among us, and it is in him that our sacrifices are acceptable to God, and in him only, *1 Pet. ii. 5.* To set up other mediators, or other altars, or other expiatory sacrifices, is in effect to set up other Gods. He is the centre of unity, in whom all God's Israel meet. 3. Yet we are to have respect to the publick worship of God, not forsaking the assemblies of his people, *Heb. x. 25.* The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob, and so should we; see *Ezek. xx. 40.* Though God will graciously accept our family-offerings, we must not therefore neglect the door of the tabernacle.

10. ¶ And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. 11. For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. 12. Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood. 13. And whatsoever man there be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, which hunteth and catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten; he shall even pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust. 14. For it is the life of all flesh, the blood of it is for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it, shall be cut off. 15. And every soul that eateth that which died of it self, or that which was torn with beasts (whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger) he shall both wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even: then shall he be clean. 16. But if he wash them not, nor bathe his flesh, then he shall bear his iniquity.

Here is a repetition and confirmation of the law against eating blood. We have met with this prohibition twice before here in the levitical law, *chap. iii. 17. vii. 26.* besides the place it had in the precepts of Noah, *Gen. ix. 4.* But here, 1. The prohibition is repeated again and again, and reference had to the former laws to this purpose, *ver. 12. I said to the children of Israel, no soul of you shall eat blood*; and again, *ver. 14. Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh.* A great stress is laid upon it, as a law which hath more in it than at first view one would think. 2. It is made binding, not only to the house of Israel, but to the strangers that sojourn among them, *ver. 10.* which perhaps was one reason why it was thought advisable for a time to forbid blood to the Gentile converts, *Acts xv. 29.* 3. The penalty annexed to this law is very severe, *ver. 10. I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood*, if he do it presumptuously, and will cut him off; and again, *ver. 14. He shall be cut off.* Note, God's wrath will be the sinner's ruin. Write that man undone, for ever undone, against whom God sets his face; for what creature is able to confront the creator? 4. A reason is given for this law, *ver. 11. because it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul*; and therefore it was appointed to make atonement with, because the life of the flesh is in the blood: the sinner deserved to die, therefore the sacrifice must die; now the blood being so the life, that ordinarily beasts were killed for man's use, by the drawing out of all their blood, God appointed the sprinkling or pouring out of the blood of the sacrifice upon the altar, to signify that the life of the sacrifice was given to God instead of the sinner's life, and as a ransom or counter-price for it; therefore without shedding of blood there was no remission, *Heb. ix. 22.* For this reason they must eat no blood, and (1.) It was then a very good reason; for God would by this means preserve the honour of that way of atonement which he had

instituted, and keep up in the minds of the people a reverent regard to it. The blood of the covenant being then sensible, no blood must be either eaten, or troden under foot as a common thing; as they must have no ointment or perfume like that which God ordered them to make for himself. But (2.) This reason is now superseded, which intimates, that the law it self was ceremonial, and is now no longer in force: the blood of Christ who is come, and we are to look for no other, is that alone which makes atonement for the soul, and of which the blood of the sacrifices was an imperfect type: the coming of the substance doth away the shadow. The blood of beasts is no longer the ransom, but Christ's blood only; and therefore there is not now that reason for abstaining from blood that was then; and we cannot suppose it was the will of God, that the law should survive the reason of it. The blood, provided it be so prepared as not to be unwholesome, is now allowed for the nourishment of our bodies, because it is no longer appointed to make atonement for the soul. (3.) Yet it hath still a useful significancy: the life is in the blood; it is the vehicle of the animal spirits, and God would have his people to regard even the life of their beasts, and not to be cruel and hard-hearted, nor to take delight in any thing that is barbarous. They must not be a blood-thirsty people. The blood then made atonement; now the blood of Christ doth so effectually, to that therefore we must have a reverent regard, and not use it as a common thing; for God will set his face against those that do so, and they shall be cut off, *Heb. x. 29.* 5. Some other precepts are here given as appendages to this law, and hedges about it. 1. They must cover the blood of that which they took in hunting, *ver. 13.* They must not only not eat it, but give it a decent burial, in token of some mystery which they must believe lay hid in this constitution. The Jews look upon this as a very weighty precept, and appoint that the blood should be covered with these words, *Blessed be he that hath sanctified us by his precepts, and commanded us to cover blood.* 2. They must not eat that which died of it self, or was torn of beasts, *ver. 15.* for the blood was either not at all, or not regularly drawn out of them. God would have them to be curious in their diet, not with the curiosity that gratifies the sensual appetite, but with that which checks and restrains it. God would not allow his children to eat every thing that came in their way, with greediness, but to consider diligently what was before them, that they might learn in other things to ask questions for conscience sake. They that flew upon the spoil sinned, *1 Sam. xiv. 32, 33.* If a man did through ignorance or inconsideration eat the flesh of any beast not duly slain, he must wash himself and his clothes, else he bore his iniquity, *ver. 15, 16.* The pollution was ceremonial, so was the purification from it; but if a man slighted the prescribed method of cleansing, or would not submit to it; he thereby contracted a moral guilt. See the nature of a remedial law; he that obeys it has the benefit of it, he that doth not, not only remains under his former guilt, but adds to that the guilt of contemning the provisions made by divine grace for his relief, and sins against the remedy.

C H A P. XVIII.

Here is, 1. A general law against all conformity to the corrupt usages of the heathen, *ver. 1,—5.* 2. Particular laws, (1.) Against incest, *ver. 6,—18.* (2.) Against beastly lusts, and barbarous idolatries, *ver. 19,—23.* 3. The enforcement of these laws from the ruin of the Canaanites, *ver. 24,—30.*

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, I am the LORD your God. 3. After the doings of the land of Egypt wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances. 4. Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the LORD your God. 5. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD.

After divers ceremonial institutions God here returns to give them moral precepts. The former are still of use to us as types, the latter still binding as laws. We have here, 1. The sacred authority by which these laws are enacted; *I am the Lord your God*, *ver. 1, 4, 30.* and *I am the Lord*, *ver. 5, 6, 21.* The Lord that have a right to rule all, your God that have a right to rule you. Jehovah is the fountain of being, and therefore the fountain of power, whose we are, whom we are bound to serve, and who is able to avenge all disobedience. Your God whom you have consented to, you are happy in, you lie under the highest obligations imaginable to, and to whom you are accountable. 2. A strict caution to take heed of retaining the reliques of the idolatries of Egypt where they had dwelt, and of receiving the infection of the idolatries of Canaan, whither they were now going, *ver. 3.* Now God was by Moses teaching them his ordinances, there was aliquid dediscendum, something to be unlearned, which they had sucked

in with their milk in Egypt, a country noted for idolatry; *Ye shall not do after the doings of the land of Egypt.* It would be the greatest absurdity in it self, to retain such an affection for their house of bondage, as to be governed in their devotions by the usages of it; and the greatest ingratitude to God, who had so wonderfully and graciously delivered them. Nay, as if they had been governed by a spirit of contradiction, even after they had received these ordinances of God, they would be in danger of admitting the wicked usages of the Canaanites, and of inheriting their vices with their land. Of this danger they are here warned, *Ye shall not walk in their ordinances.* Such a tyrant is custom, that their practices are called ordinances, and they became rivals even with God's ordinances, and God's professing people were in danger of receiving law from them. 3. A solemn charge to them to *keep God's judgments, statutes, and ordinances,* ver. 4, 5. To this charge, and many other the like, David seems to refer, in the many prayers and professions he makes relating to God's laws in the cixth psalm. Observe here, (1.) The great rule of our obedience; God's statutes, and judgments. Those we must *keep, to walk therein.* We must keep them in our books, and keep them in our hands, that we may practise them in our hearts and lives. *Remember God's commandments to do them,* Psal. ciii. 18. keep in them, as our way to travel in; keep to them as our rule to work by. Keep them as our treasure, as the apple of our eye, with the utmost care and value. (2.) The great advantage of our obedience; *Which if a man do, he shall live in them,* i. e. he shall be happy here and hereafter. We have reason to thank God, (1.) That this is still in force as a promise, with a very favourable construction of the condition. If we keep God's commandments in sincerity, though we come short of a sinless perfection, we shall find the way of duty is the way of comfort, and will be the way to happiness. Godliness has the *promise of life,* 1 Tim. iv. 8. Wisdom hath said, *Keep my commandments, and live:* and if *through the Spirit we mortify the deeds of the body,* (which are to us as the usages of Egypt were to Israel) *we shall live.* (2.) That it is not so in force in the nature of a covenant, as that the least transgression shall for ever exclude us from this life. The apostle quotes this twice, as opposite to the faith which the gospel reveals. It is the description of the *righteousness which is by the law, the man that doth them shall live in them,* Rom. x. 5. and is urged to prove that *the law is not of faith,* Gal. iii. 12. The alteration which the gospel has made, is in the last word; still *the man that doth them shall live,* but not *live in them;* for the law could not give life, because we could not perfectly keep it; it was *weak through the flesh,* not in it self; but now *the man that doth them shall live by the faith of the son of God.* He shall owe his life to the grace of Christ, and not to the merit of his own works; see Gal. iii. 21, 22. *The just shall live,* but they shall live *by faith,* by virtue of their union with Christ, who is their life.

6. ¶ None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness: I am the LORD. 7. The nakedness of thy father, or the nakedness of thy mother, shalt thou not uncover; she is thy mother, thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. 8. The nakedness of thy father's wife shalt thou not uncover: it is thy father's nakedness. 9. The nakedness of thy sister, the daughter of thy father, or daughter of thy mother, whether she be born at home, or born abroad, even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover. 10. The nakedness of thy sons daughter, or of thy daughters daughter, even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover: for theirs is thine own nakedness. 11. The nakedness of thy father's wives daughter, begotten of thy father, (she is thy sister) thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. 12. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's sister: she is thy father's near kinswoman. 13. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy mother's sister, for she is thy mother's near kinswoman. 14. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's brother, thou shalt not approach to his wife: she is thine aunt. 15. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy daughter-in-law: she is thy sons wife, thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. 16. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife: it is thy brother's nakedness. 17. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, neither shalt thou take her sons daughter, or her daughters daughter, to uncover her nakedness; for they are her near kinswomen: it is wickedness. 18. Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, besides the other in her life-time.

These laws relate to the seventh commandment, and no doubt are obliging to us now under the gospel, for they are consonant to the very light and law of nature: one of the articles, that of a man's having his father's wife, the apostle speaks of as a sin *not so much as named among the Gentiles,* 1 Cor. v. 1. Though some of

the incests here forbidden were practised by some particular persons among the heathen, yet they were disallowed and detested, unless among those nations who were become barbarous, and were quite given up to vile affections.

Observe, 1. That which is forbidden as to the relations here instanced in, is *approaching to them to uncover their nakedness,* ver. 6. (1.) It is chiefly intended to forbid the marrying of any of these relations. Marriage is a divine institution; that and the sabbath the eldest of all other, of equal standing with man upon the earth: it is intended for the comfort of human life, and the decent and honourable propagation of the humane race, such as became the dignity of man's nature, above that of the beasts. It is *honourable in all,* and these laws are for the support of the honour of it. It was requisite a divine ordinance should be subject to divine rules and restraints, especially because it concerns a thing wherein the corrupt nature of man is as apt as in any thing to be wilful and impetuous in its desires, and impatient of check. Yet these prohibitions, besides their being enacted by an uncontested authority, are in themselves highly reasonable and equitable. (1.) By marriage two were to become one flesh, therefore those that before were in a sense one flesh by nature, could not without the greatest absurdity become one flesh by institution; for the institution was designed to unite those who before were not united. (2.) Marriage puts an equality between husband and wife; Is she not thy companion taken out of thy side? Therefore if those, who before were superior and inferior, should intermarry, (which is the case in most of the instances here laid down) the order of nature would be taken away by a positive institution, which must by no means be allowed. The inequality between master and servant, noble and ignoble, is founded in consent and custom, and there is no harm done if that be taken away by the equality of marriage; but the inequality between parents and children, uncles and nieces, aunts and nephews, either by blood or marriage, is founded by nature, and is therefore perpetual, and cannot without confusion be taken away by the equality of marriage, the institution of which, though ancient, is subsequent to the order of nature. (3.) No relations that are equals are forbidden, but only brothers and sisters, either by the whole blood, or half blood, or by marriage; and in this there is not the same natural absurdity, as in the former, for Adam's sons must of necessity marry their own sisters; but it was requisite it should be made by a positive law unlawful and detestable, for the preventing of sinful familiarities between those, that in the days of their youth are supposed to live in a house together, and yet cannot intermarry without defeating one of the intentions of marriage, which is the enlargement of friendship and interest. If every man married his own sister, as they would be apt to do from generation to generation, if it were lawful, each family would be a world to it self, and it would be forgotten that *we are members one of another.* It is certain this has always been looked upon, by the more sober heathen, as a most infamous and abominable thing; and they who had not this law, yet were herein a law to themselves. The making use of the ordinance of marriage for the patronizing of incestuous mixtures, is so far from justifying them, or extenuating their guilt, that it adds the guilt of profaning an ordinance of God, and prostituting that to the vilest purposes, which was instituted for the noblest ends. But (2.) Uncleannefs committed with any of these relations out of marriage, is likewise without doubt forbidden here, and no less intended than the former: as also, all lascivious carriage, wanton dalliance, and every thing that hath the appearance of this evil. Relations must love one another, and are to have free and familiar converse with each other, but it must be with all purity; and the less it is suspected of evil by others, the more care ought the persons themselves to take, that *satan do not get advantage against them,* for he is a very subtle enemy, and seeks all occasions against us.

2. The relations forbidden are most of them plainly described; and it is generally laid down as a rule, that what relations of a man's own he is bound up from marrying with, the same relations of his wife he is likewise forbidden to marry with, for they two are one. That law which forbids marrying a brother's wife, ver. 16. had an exception peculiar to the Jewish state, that if a man died without issue, his brother or next of kin should marry the widow, and raise up seed to the deceased, *Deut. xxv. 5.* for reasons which held good only in that common-wealth; and therefore now those reasons cease, the exception ceaseth, and the law is in force, that a man must in no case marry his brother's widow. That article, ver. 18. which forbids a man to *take a wife to her sister,* supposeth a connivance at polygamy, as some other laws then did, (*Exod. xxi. 10. Deut. xxi. 15.*) but forbids a man's marrying two sisters, as Jacob did, because between them who had before been equal there would be apt to arise greater jealousies and animosities, than between wives that were not so nearly related. If the sister of the wife be taken for the concubine, or secondary wife, nothing can be more vexing in her life, or as long as she lives.

19. Also thou shalt not approach unto a woman to uncover her nakedness, as long as she is put apart for her uncleannefs. 20. Moreover, thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbours wife to defile thy self with her. 21. And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the

the fire to Moloch, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God : I am the LORD. 22. Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind : it is abomination. 23. Neither shalt thou lie with any beast, to defile thyself therewith : neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto : it is confusion. 24. Defile not you your selves in any of these things : for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you. 25. And the land is defiled : therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land it self vomiteth out her inhabitants. 26. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you. 27. (For all these abominations have the men of the land done which were before you, and the land is defiled) 28. That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you. 29. For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people. 30. Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance, that ye commit not any one of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not your selves therein : I am the LORD your God.

Here is, 1. A law to preserve the honour of the marriage-bed, that it shall not be unseasonably used, *ver. 19.* nor invaded by an adulterer, *ver. 20.* 2. A law against that which was the most unnatural idolatry, causing their children to *pass through the fire to Moloch*, *ver. 21.* Moloch (as some think) was the idol in and by which they worshipped the sun, that great fire of the world; and therefore in the worship of it they made their own children either sacrifices to this idol, burning them to death before it; or devotees to it, causing them to pass between two fires, as some think, or to be thrown through one to the honour of this pretended deity; imagining, that the consecrating but of one of their children in this manner to Moloch, would procure good fortune for all the rest of their children. Did idolaters thus give their own children to false Gods, and shall we think any thing too dear to be dedicated to, or to be parted with for the true God? See how this sin of Israel (which they were afterwards guilty of, notwithstanding this law) is aggravated from the relation which they and their children stood in to God, *Ezek. xvi. 20. Thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast born unto me, and these thou hast sacrificed.* Therefore it is here called *profaning the name of their God*; for it looked as if they thought they were under greater obligations to Moloch than to Jehovah; for to him they offered their cattle only, but to Moloch their children. 3. A law against unnatural lusts, sodomy, and bestiality, sins not to be named or thought of without the utmost abhorrence imaginable, *ver. 22, 23.* Other sins level men with the beasts, but these sink them much lower: That ever there should have been occasion for the making of these laws, and that since they are published they should ever have been broken, is the perpetual reproach and scandal of the human nature; and the giving of men up to these vile affections, was many times the punishment of their idolatries; so the apostle shews, *Rom. i. 24.* 4. Arguments against these and the like abominable wickednesses. He that has an indisputable right to command us, yet because he will deal with us as men, and draw with the cords of a man, condescends to reason with us. (1.) Sinners defile themselves with these abominations, *ver. 24. Defile not your selves in any of these things.* All sin is defiling to the conscience, but these are sins that have a particular turpitude in them. Our heavenly Father, in kindness to us, requires of us that we keep our selves clean, and do not wallow in the dirt. (2.) The souls that commit them shall be cut off, *ver. 29.* And justly; for, *If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy*, *1 Cor. iii. 17.* Fleshly lusts war against the soul, and will certainly be the ruin of it, if God's mercy and grace prevent not. (3.) The land is defiled, *ver. 25.* If such wickednesses as these be practised and connived at, the land is thereby made unfit to have God's tabernacle in it, and the pure and holy God will withdraw the tokens of his gracious presence from it. It is also rendered unwholesome to the inhabitants, who are hereby infected with sin, and exposed to plagues: and it is really nauseous and loathsome to all good men in it, as the wickedness of Sodom was to the soul of righteous Lot. (4.) These have been the abominations of the former inhabitants, *ver. 24, 27.* Therefore it was necessary these laws should be made, as antidotes and preservatives from the plague are then necessary, when we go into an infected place. And therefore they should not practise any such things; because the nations that had practised them, now lay under the curse of God, and were shortly to fall by the sword of Israel. They could not but be sensible how odious those people had made themselves, who wallowed in this mire, and how they stank in the nostrils of all good men; and shall a people sanctified and dignified, as Israel was, make themselves thus vile? When we observe how ill sin looks in others, we should use that as an argu-

ment with our selves, with the utmost care and caution to preserve our purity. (5.) For these and the like sins the Canaanites were to be destroyed: these filled the measure of the Amorites iniquity, *Gen. xv. 16.* and brought down that destruction of so many populous kingdoms, which the Israelites were now shortly to be not only the spectators, but the instruments of; *Therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it*, *ver. 25.* Note, The tremendous judgments of God executed on those that are daringly profane and atheistical, are intended as warnings to those who profess religion, to take heed of every thing that has the least appearance of, or tendency towards profaneness or atheism. Even the ruin of Canaanites is an admonition to Israelites, not to do like them. Nay, to shew that not only the creator is provoked, but the creation burthened by such abominations as these; it is added, *ver. 25. The land it self vomiteth out her inhabitants.* The very ground they went upon, did as it were groan under them, and was sick of them, and not easy till it had discharged it self of these enemies of the Lord, *Isa. i. 24.* This speaks the extreme loathsomeness of sin; sinful man indeed *drinks in iniquity like water*, but the harmless part of the creation even heaves at it, and riseth against it. Many an house and many a town hath spued out the wicked inhabitants, as it were with abhorrence, *Rev. iii. 16.* therefore take heed, saith God, *that the land spue not you out also*, *ver. 28.* It was secured to them, and entailed upon them, and yet they must expect that if they made the vices of the Canaanites their own, with their land, their fate would be the same. Note, Wicked Israelites are as abominable to God as wicked Canaanites, and more so, and will be as soon spued out, or sooner. Such a warning as this here given to the Israelites, is given by the apostle to the Gentile converts, with reference to the rejected Jews, in whose room they were substituted, *Rom. xi. 19, &c.* they must take heed of falling by the same example of unbelief, *Heb. iv. 11.* Apply it more generally; and let it deter us effectually from all sinful courses, to consider, how many they have been the ruin of. Lay the ear of faith to the gates of the bottomless pit, and hear the doleful shrieks and outcries of damned sinners, whom earth has spued out, and hell has swallowed, that find themselves undone, for ever undone by sin, and tremble lest this be your portion at last. God's threatnings and judgments should frighten us from sin. Lastly, The chapter concludes with a sovereign antidote against this infection, *ver. 30. Therefore ye shall keep mine ordinances, that ye commit not any one of these abominable customs.* This is the remedy prescribed. Note, 1. Sinful customs are abominable customs, and their being common and fashionable, doth not make them at all the less abominable, nor should we the less abominate them, but the more; because the more customary they are, the more dangerous they are. 2. It is of pernicious consequence to admit and allow of any one sinful custom, because one will make way for many. *Uno absurdo dato mille sequuntur.* The way of sin is down-hill. 3. A close and constant adherence to God's ordinances, is the most effectual preservative from the infection of gross sin. The more we taste of the sweetness, and feel of the power of holy ordinances, the less mind we shall have to the forbidden pleasures of sinners abominable customs. It is the grace of God only that will secure us, and that grace is to be expected only in the use of the means of grace. Nor doth God ever leave any to their own hearts lusts, till they have first left him and his institutions.

C H A P. XIX.

Some ceremonial precepts there are in this chapter, but most of them are moral. One would wonder that when some of the lighter matters of the law are greatly enlarged upon, witness two long chapters concerning the leprosy, many of the weightier matters are put into a little compass: divers of the single verses of this chapter contain whole laws concerning judgment and mercy; for these are things which are manifest in every man's conscience; mens own thoughts are able to explain these, and to comment upon them. (1.) The laws of this chapter which were peculiar to the Jews are, 1. Concerning their peace-offerings, *ver. 5—8.* 2. Concerning the gleanings of their fields, *ver. 9, 10.* 3. Against mixtures of their cattle, feed, and cloth, *ver. 19.* 4. Concerning their trees, *ver. 23—25.* 5. Against some superstitious usages, *ver. 26—28.* But, (2.) Most of these precepts are obliging to us, for they are expositions of most of the ten commandments. 1. Here is the preface to the ten commandments, I am the Lord, repeated here fifteen times. 2. A sum of the ten commandments. All the first table in that, Be ye holy, *ver. 2.* All the second table in that, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, *ver. 18.* and an answer to that question, *Who is my neighbour?* *ver. 33, 34.* 3. Something of each commandment. 1. The first commandment is implied in that which is oft repeated here, I am your God. And here is a prohibition of enchantment, *ver. 26.* and witchcraft, *ver. 31.* which make a god of the devil. 2. Idolatry against the second commandment is forbidden, *ver. 4.* 3. Profanation of God's name against the third, *ver. 12.* 4. Sabbath sanctification is pressed, *ver. 3, 30.* 5. Children are required to honour their parents, *ver. 3.* and the aged, *ver. 32.* 6. Hatred and revenge are here forbidden against the sixth commandment, *ver. 17, 18.* 7. Adultery, *ver. 20—22.* and whoredom, *ver. 29.* 8. Justice

8. *Justice is here required in judgment, ver. 15. theft forbidden, ver. 11. fraud, and withholding dues, ver. 13. and false weights, ver. 35, 36. 9. Lying, ver. 11. Slandering, ver. 14. Tale-bearing, and false witness bearing, ver. 16. 10. The tenth commandment, laying a restraint upon the heart, so doth that, ver. 17. Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart. And here is a solemn charge to observe all these statutes, ver. 37. Now these are things which need not much help for the understanding of them, but require constant care and watchfulness for the observing of them. A good understanding have all they that do these commandments.*

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy; for I the LORD your God am holy. 3. ¶ Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I am the LORD your God. 4. Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to your selves molten gods: I am the LORD your God. 5. ¶ And if ye offer a sacrifice of peace-offerings unto the LORD; ye shall offer it at your own will. 6. It shall be eaten the same day ye offer it, and on the morrow; and if ought remain until the third day, it shall be burnt in the fire. 7. And if it be eaten at all on the third day, it is abominable; it shall not be accepted. 8. Therefore every one that eateth it shall bear his iniquity, because he hath profaned the hallowed thing of the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. 9. ¶ And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field; neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. 10. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard; neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the LORD your God.

Moses is ordered to deliver the summary of laws to all the congregation of the children of Israel, ver. 2. not to Aaron and his sons only, but to all the people, for they were all concerned to know their duty. Even in the darker ages of the law, that religion could not be of God, which boasted of ignorance as its mother. Moses must make known God's statutes to all the congregation, and proclaim them through the camp. These laws, it is probable, he delivered himself to as many of the people as could be within hearing at once, and so by degrees at several times to them all. Many of the precepts here given they had received before, but it was requisite they should be repeated, that they might be remembered; Precept must be upon precept, and line upon line, and all little enough.

In these verses, 1. It is required that Israel be a holy people, because the God of Israel is a holy God, ver. 2. Their being distinguished from all other people by peculiar laws and customs, was intended to teach them a real separation from the world and the flesh, and an intire devotedness to God. And this is now the law of Christ, (The Lord bring every thought within us into obedience to it!) *Ye shall be holy, for I am holy, 1 Pet. i. 15, 16.* We are the followers of the holy Jesus, and therefore must be according to our capacity consecrated to God's honour, and conformed to his nature and will. Israel was sanctified by the Types and shadows, *Lev. xx. 8.* but we are sanctified by the truth, or substance of all those shadows, *Joh. xvii. 17. Tit. ii. 14.*

2. That children be obedient to their parents, ver. 3. *Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father.* (1.) The fear here required, is the same with the honour commanded by the fifth commandment; see *Mal. i. 6.* It includes inward reverence and esteem, outward expressions of respect, obedience to the lawful commands of parents, care and endeavour to please them, and make them easy, and to avoid every thing that may offend and grieve them, and incur their displeasure. The Jewish doctors ask, What is this fear that is owing to a father? And they answer, It is not to stand in his way, nor to sit in his place, not to contradict what he saith, or to carp at it, not to call him by his name, either living or dead, but my Father, or Sir; it is to provide for him if he be poor, and the like. (2.) Children, when they grow up to be men, must not think themselves discharged from this duty: every man, though he be a wise man and a great man, yet must reverence his parents, because they are his parents. (3.) The mother is put first, which is not usual, to shew that the duty is equally owing to both; if the mother survive the father, still she must be revered and obeyed. (4.) It is added, *and keep my sabbaths.* If God provides by his law for the preserving of the honour of parents, parents must use their authority over their children for the preserving of the honour of God, particularly the honour of his sabbaths, the custody of which is very much committed to parents by the fourth commandment, *Thou, and thy son, and thy daughter.* The ruin of young people hath often been observed to begin in the contempt of their parents, and the profanation of the sabbath day: Fifthly therefore are these

two precepts here put together in the beginning of this abridgment of the statutes, *Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father, and keep my sabbaths.* Those are hopeful children, and likely to do well, that make conscience of honouring their parents, and keeping holy the sabbath day. (5.) The reason added to both these precepts is, *I am the Lord your God;* the Lord of the sabbath, and the God of your parents.

3. That God only be worshipped, and not by images, ver. 4. *Turn ye not to idols; to Elilim, to vanities, things of no power, no value, gods that are no gods.* Turn not from the true God to false ones, from the mighty God to impotent ones, from the God that will make you holy and happy to those that will deceive you, debauch you, ruin you, and make you for ever miserable. Turn not your eye to them, much less your heart. *Make not to your selves gods,* the creatures of your own fancy, nor think to worship the creator by molten gods. You are the work of God's hands, be not so absurd as to worship gods *the work of your own hands.* Molten gods are instanced in for the sake of the molten calf.

4. That the sacrifices of their peace-offerings should always be offered, and taken according to the law, ver. 5, 6, 7, 8. There was some particular reason it is likely for the repetition of this law, rather than any other relating to the sacrifices. The eating of the peace-offerings was the peoples part, and was done from under the eye of the priests, and perhaps some of them had kept the cold meat of their peace-offerings, as they had done the manna, *Exod. xvi. 20.* longer than was appointed, which occasioned this caution; see the law it self before, *chap. vii. 16, 17, 18.* God will have his own work done in his own time. Though the sacrifice was offered according to the law, if it were not eaten according to the law, it was not accepted. Though ministers do their part, what the better if people do not theirs? There is work to be done after our spiritual sacrifices, in a due improvement of them, which if it be neglected all is in vain.

5. That they should leave the gleanings of their harvest and vintage for the poor, ver. 9, 10. Note, Works of piety must be always attended with works of charity, according as our ability is. When they gathered in their corn, they must leave some standing in the corner of the field; the Jewish doctors say, it should be a fixtieth part of the field; and they must also leave the gleanings and the small clusters of their grapes, which at first were overlooked. This law, though not binding now in the letter of it, yet teacheth us, 1. That we must not be covetous and griping, and greedy of every thing we can lay any claim to; nor insist upon our right in things small and trivial. 2. That we must be well pleased to see the poor supplied and refreshed with the fruit of our labours. We must not think every thing lost that goes beside our selves, nor any thing wasted that goes to the poor. 3. That times of joy, such as harvest-time is, are proper times for charity, that when we rejoice the poor may rejoice with us; and when our hearts are blessing God, their loins may bless us.

11. ¶ Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lye one to another. 12. ¶ And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD. 13. ¶ Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired, shall not abide with thee all night until the morning. 14. ¶ Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind, but shalt fear thy God: I am the LORD. 15. ¶ Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment; thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour. 16. ¶ Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the LORD. 17. ¶ Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. 18. ¶ Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self: I am the LORD.

We are taught here, 1. To be honest and true in all our dealings, ver. 11. God, who has appointed every man's property by his providence, forbids by his law the invading of that appointment, either by downright theft, *Ye shall not steal,* or by fraudulent dealing, *You shall not cheat, or deal falsely.* Whatever we have in the world, we must see to it that it be honestly come by, for we cannot be truly rich, nor long rich with that which is not. The God of truth, who requires truth in the heart, *Psal. li. 6.* requires it also in the tongue, *Neither lye one to another,* either in bargaining, or common converse. This is one of the laws of christianity, *Col. iii. 9. Lye not one to another.* They that do not speak truth, do not deserve to be told truth: they that sin by lying, justly suffer by it, therefore we are forbid to lye one to another; for if we lye to others, we teach them to lye to us. 2. To maintain a very reverend regard to the sacred name of God, ver. 12. and not to call him to be witness either, (1.) To a lye, *Ye shall*

not swear falsely. It is bad to tell a lye, but it is much worse to swear it. Or, (2.) To a trifle, and every impertinence, *Neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God*, by alienating it to any other purpose, than that for which it is to be religiously used. 3. Neither to take nor keep any one's right from them, *ver. 13.* We must not take that which is none of our own, either by fraud or robbery; nor detain that which belongs to another, particularly the wages of the hireling, let it not abide with thee all night. Let the day-labourer have his wages as soon as he has done his day's work, if he desire it. It is a great sin to deny the payment of it, nay, to defer it to his damage, a sin that cries to heaven for vengeance, *Jam. v. 4.* 4. To be particularly tender of the credit and safety of those that cannot help themselves, *ver. 14.* (1.) The credit of the deaf; Thou shalt not curse the deaf; not those that are naturally deaf, that cannot hear at all, or those that are absent, and at present out of hearing of the curse, and so cannot shew their resentment, return the affront, or right themselves: or, those that are patient, that seem as if they heard not, and are not willing to take notice of it, as David, *Psal. xxxviii. 13.* Do not therefore injure any because they are unwilling, or unable to avenge themselves, for God sees and hears though they do not. (2.) The safety of the blind we must likewise be tender of, and not put a stumbling-block before them; for this is to add affliction to the afflicted, and to make God's providence a servant to our malice. This prohibition implies a precept to help the blind, and remove stumbling-blocks out of their way. The Jewish writers thinking it impossible that any should be so barbarous as to put a *stumbling-block in the way of the blind*, understood it figuratively, that it forbids giving ill counsel to those that are simple, and easily imposed upon, by which they may be led to do something to their own prejudice. We ought to take heed of doing any thing which may occasion our weak brother to fall, *Rom. xiv. 13. 1 Cor. viii. 9.* It is added as a preservative from these sins, *but fear thou God.* Thou dost not fear the deaf and blind, they cannot right themselves, but remember it is the glory of God to help the helpless, and he will plead their cause. Note, The fear of God will restrain us from doing that which will not expose us to mens resentments. 5. Judges and all in authority are here commanded to give verdict and judgment without partiality, *ver. 15.* whether they were constituted judges by commission, or made so in a particular case by the consent of both parties, as referees or arbitrators, they must do no wrong to either side, but to the utmost of their skill must go according to the rules of equity, having respect purely to the merits of the cause, and not to the characters of the person. Justice must never be perverted; either (1.) in pity to the poor, *Thou shalt not respect the person of the poor*, *Exod. xxiii. 3.* Whatever may be given to a poor man as an alms, yet let nothing be awarded him as his right, but what he is legally entitled to, nor let his poverty excuse him from any just punishment for a fault. Or, (2.) in veneration or fear of the mighty, in whose favours judges would be most frequently biased. The Jews say, judges were obliged by this law to be so impartial, as not to let one of the contending parties sit while the other stood; nor permit one to say what he pleased, and bid the other be short; see *James ii. 1, 2, 3.* 6. We are all forbidden to do any thing injurious to our neighbour's good name, *ver. 16.* either (1.) in common conversation; *Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer.* It is as ill an office as a man can put himself into, to be the publisher of every man's faults, divulging what was secret, aggravating crimes, and making the worst of every thing that was amiss, with design to blast and ruin mens reputation, and to sow discord among neighbours. The word used for a tale-bearer signifies a pedlar, or petty chapman, the interlopers of trade; for tale-bearers pick up ill-natured stories at one house, and utter them at another, and commonly barter scandals by way of exchange. See this sin condemned, *Prov. xi. 13. xx. 19. Jer. ix. 4, 5. Ezek. xxii. 9.* Or, (2.) in witness-bearing; neither shalt thou stand as a witness against the blood of thy neighbour, if his blood be innocent, nor join in confederacy with such bloody men as these described *Prov. i. 11, 12.* The Jewish doctors put this further sense upon it, Thou shalt not stand by and see thy brother in danger, but thou shalt come in to his relief and succour, though it be with the peril of thy own life or limb; they add, He that can by his testimony clear one that is accused, is obliged by this law to do it, see *Prov. xxiv. 11, 12.* 7. We are commanded to rebuke our neighbour in love, *ver. 17.* *Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour.* (1.) Rather rebuke him, than hate him, for an injury done to thy self. If we apprehend that our neighbour has any way wronged us, we must not conceive a secret grudge against him, and estrange our selves from him, speaking to him neither bad nor good, as the manner of some is, who have an art of concealing their displeasure, till they have an opportunity of a full revenge, 2 *Sam. xiii. 22.* But we must rather give vent to our resentments with the meekness of wisdom, endeavour to convince our brother of the injury, reason the case fairly with him, and so put an end to the disgust conceived: this is the rule our Saviour gives in this case, *Luke xvii. 3.* (2.) Therefore rebuke him for his sin against God, because thou lovest him; endeavour to bring him to repentance, that his sin may be pardoned, and he may turn from it, and it may not be suffered to lie upon him. Note, Friendly reproof is a duty we owe to one

another, and we ought both to give it and take it in love. *Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness*, *Psal. cxli. 5.* Faithful and useful are these wounds of a friend, *Prov. xxvii. 5, 6.* It is here strictly commanded, *Thou shalt in any wise do it*, and not omit it under any pretence. Consider, 1. The guilt we incur by not reproving: it is construed here hating our brother. We are ready to argue thus, Such a one is a friend I love, therefore I will not make him uneasy by telling him of his faults; but we should rather say, therefore I will do him the kindness to tell him of them. Love covers sin from others, but not from the sinner himself. 2. The mischief we do by not reproving; we suffer sin upon him: and must we help the ass of an enemy that is fallen under his burthen, and shall we not help the soul of a friend? *Exod. xxiii. 5.* And by suffering sin upon him, we are in danger of bearing sin for him, as the margin reads it. If we reprove not the unfruitful works of darkness, we have fellowship with them, and become accessaries *ex post facto*, *Eph. v. 11.* It is thy brother, thy neighbour that is concerned; and he was a Cain that said, *Am I my brother's keeper?* 8. We are here required to put off all malice, and to put on brotherly love, *ver. 18.* (1.) We must be ill affected to none; *Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge*, to the same purpose with that, *ver. 17.* *Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart*; for malice is murder begun. If our brother has done us an injury, we must not return it upon him, that is avenging; we must not upon every occasion upbraid him with it, that is bearing a grudge; but we must both forgive it and forget it, for thus we are forgiven of God. It is a most ill-natured thing, and the bane of friendship, to retain the resentment of affronts and injuries, and to let that sword devour for ever. (2.) We must be well affected to all; *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self.* We often wrong our selves, but we soon forgive our selves those wrongs, and they do not at all lessen our love to our selves; and in like manner we should love our neighbour. Our Saviour hath made this the second great commandment of the law, *Matt. xxii. 39.* and the apostle shews how it is the summary of all the laws of the second table, *Rom. xiii. 9, 10. Gal. v. 14.* We must love our neighbour as truly as we love our selves, and without dissimulation; we must evidence our love to our neighbour in the same way by which we evidence our love to our selves, preventing his hurt, and procuring his good to the utmost of our power. We must do to our neighbour as we would be done to our selves, *Matt. vii. 12.* putting our souls into his soul's stead, *Job xvi. 4, 5.* Nay, we must in many cases deny our selves for the good of our neighbour, as St. Paul, *1 Cor. ix. 19, &c.* Herein the gospel goes beyond even the excellent precept of the law; for Christ, by laying down his life for us, hath taught us even to lay down our lives for the brethren, in some cases, *1 Joh. iii. 16.* and so to love our neighbour better than our selves.

19. ¶ Ye shall keep my statutes: Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a divers kind: Thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed: neither shall a garment mingled of linnen and woollen come upon thee. 20. ¶ And whosoever lieth carnally with a woman that is a bond-maid betrothed to an husband, and not at all redeemed, nor freedom given her, she shall be scourged: they shall not be put to death, because she was not free. 21. And he shall bring his trespass-offering unto the LORD, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, even a ram for a trespass-offering. 22. And the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass-offering before the LORD, for his sin which he hath done: and the sin which he hath done, shall be forgiven him. 23. ¶ And when ye shall come into the land, and shall have planted all manner of trees for food, then ye shall count the fruit thereof as uncircumcised: three years shall it be as uncircumcised unto you; it shall not be eaten of. 24. But in the fourth year all the fruit thereof shall be holy to praise the LORD withal. 25. And in the fifth year shall ye eat of the fruit thereof, that it may yield unto you the increase thereof: I am the LORD your God. 26. ¶ Ye shall not eat any thing with the blood: neither shall ye use enchantment, nor observe times. 27. Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard. 28. Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the LORD. 29. ¶ Do not prostitute thy daughter, to cause her to be a whore; lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedness.

Here is, 1. A law against mixtures, *ver. 19.* God in the beginning made the cattle after their kind, *Gen. i. 25.* and we must acquiesce in the order of nature God hath established, believing that is best and sufficient, and not covet monsters. Add then not unto his works, lest he reprove thee; for it is the excellency of the

work of God, that nothing can, without making it worse, be either put to it, or taken from it, *Ecccl. iii. 14.* As what God has joined we must not separate, so what he hath separated we must not join. The sowing of mingled corn, and the wearing of linsley-wolfey garments are forbidden, either as superstitious customs of the heathen, or to intimate, how careful they should be not to mingle themselves with the heathen, nor to weave any of the usages of the Gentiles into God's ordinances. Ainsworth suggests, that it was to lead Israel to the simplicity and sincerity of religion, and to all the parts and doctrines of the law and gospel in their distinct kinds. As faith is necessary, good works are necessary, but to mingle these together in the cause of our justification before God, is forbidden, *Gal. ii. 16.* 2. A law for the punishing of adultery committed with one that was a bond-maid that was espoused, *ver. 20, 21, 22.* If she had not been espoused, the law appointed no punishment at all; being espoused, if she had not been a bond-maid, the punishment had been no less than death: but being as yet a bond-maid, (though before the compleating of her espousals she must have been made free) the capital punishment is remitted, and they shall both be scourged; or, as some think, the woman only, and the man was to bring a sacrifice. It was for the honour of marriage, though but begun by betrothing, that the crime should be punished; but it was for the honour of freedom that it should not be punished so as the debauching of a free woman was; so great was the difference then made between bond and free, *Gal. iv. 30.* but the gospel of Christ knows no such distinction, *Col. iii. 11.* 3. A law concerning fruit-trees, that for the three first years after they were planted, if they should happen to be so forward as to bear in that time, yet no use should be made of the fruit, *ver. 23, 24, 25.* It was therefore the practice of the Jews to pluck off the fruit as soon as they perceived it knit, from their young trees, as gardeners do sometimes, because their early bearing hinders their growing. If any did come to perfection, it was not to be used in the service either of God or man; but what they bore the fourth year was to be holy to the Lord, either given to the priests, or eaten before the Lord with joy, as their second tithe was, and from thenceforward it was all their own. Now, (1.) Some think this taught them not to follow the custom of the heathen, who they say consecrated the very first products of their fruit-trees to their idols, saying, that otherwise all the fruits would be blasted. (2.) This law in the case of fruit-trees seems to be parallel with that in the case of animals, that no creature should be accepted as an offering till it was past eight days old, nor till that day were children to be circumcised; see *Lev. xxii. 27.* God would have the first-fruits of their trees, but because for the three first years they were as inconsiderable as a lamb or a calf under eight days old, therefore God would not have them, for it is fit he should have every thing at its best; and yet he would not allow them to use them, because his first-fruits were not as yet offered, they must therefore be accounted as uncircumcised, *i. e.* as an animal under eight days old, not fit for any use. (3.) We are hereby taught not to be over-hasty in catching at any comfort, but to be willing with patience to wait the time for the enjoyment of it, and particularly to acknowledge our selves unworthy of the increase of the earth, our right to the fruits of which was forfeited by our first parents eating forbidden fruit, and we are restored to it only by the word of God and prayer, *1 Tim. iv. 5.* 4. A law against the superstitious usages of the heathen, *ver. 26, 27, 28.* 1. Eating upon the blood, as the Gentiles did, who gathered the blood of their sacrifices into a vessel, for their dæmons (as they fancied) to drink, and then sate about it, eating the flesh themselves, signifying their communion with devils, by their feasting with them. Let not this custom be used, for the blood of God's sacrifices was to be sprinkled on the altar, and then poured at the foot of it, and conveyed away. 2. Inchantment and divination, and a superstitious observation of times, some days and hours lucky, and others unlucky. Curious arts of this kind, it is likely, had been of late invented by the Egyptian priests, to amuse the people, and support their own credit. The Israelites had seen them practised, but must by no means imitate them. It would be unpardonable in them, to whom were committed the oracles of God, to ask counsel of the devil; and yet worse in christians, to whom the Son of God is manifested, who has destroyed the works of the devil. For christians to have their nativities cast, and their fortunes told them, to use spells and charms for the cure of diseases, and the driving away of evil spirits, to be affected with the falling of the salt, an hare crossing the way, cross days, or the like, is an intolerable affront to the Lord Jesus, a support of paganism and idolatry, and a reproach both to themselves, and to that worthy name by which they are called: and they must be grossly ignorant, both of the law and the gospel, that ask, What harm is there in these things? Is it no harm for those that have fellowship with Christ to have fellowship with devils, or to learn the ways of those that have? Surely we have not so learned Christ. 3. There was a superstition even in trimming themselves, used by the heathen, which must not be imitated by the people of God; *Ye shall not round the corners of your heads.* They that worshipped the hosts of heaven, in honour of them cut their hair, so as that their heads might resemble the celestial globe; but as the custom was foolish in it self, so being done with respect to their

false gods, it was idolatrous. 4. The rites and ceremonies by which they expressed their sorrow at their funerals, must not be imitated, *ver. 28.* They must not make cuts or prints in their flesh for the dead; for the heathen did so to pacify the infernal deities they dreamt of, and to make them propitious to their deceased friends. Christ by his sufferings has altered the property of death, and made it a true friend to every true Israelite; and now as there needs nothing to make death propitious to us, (for if God be so, death is so of course) so we sorrow not as those that have no hope. Those whom the God of Israel had set apart for himself, must not receive the image and superscription of these dung-hill deities. Lastly, The prostituting of their daughters to uncleanness, which is here forbidden, *ver. 29.* seems to have been practised by the heathen in their idolatrous worships, for with such abominations those unclean spirits which they worshipped were well pleased. And when lewdness obtained as a religious rite, and was committed in their temples, no marvel that the land became full of that wickedness; which, when it entered at the temple doors, overspread the land like a mighty torrent, and bore down all the fences of virtue and modesty. The devil himself could not have brought such abominations into their lives, if he had not first brought them into their worships. And justly were they given up to vile affections, who forsook the holy God, and gave divine honours to impure spirits. Those that dishonour God are thus suffered to dishonour themselves and their families.

30. ¶ Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the LORD. 31. ¶ Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God. 32. ¶ Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the LORD. 33. ¶ And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. 34. But the stranger that dwelleth with you, shall be unto you as one born amongst you; and thou shalt love him as thy self; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God. 35. ¶ Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in mete-yard, in weight, or in measure. 36. Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin shall ye have: I am the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt. 37. Therefore shall ye observe all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them: I am the LORD.

Here is, 1. A law for the preserving of the honour of the time and place appropriated to the service of God, *ver. 30.* This would be a means to secure them both from the idolatries and superstitions of the heathen, and from all immoralities in conversation. (1.) Sabbaths must be religiously observed, and not those times mentioned, *ver. 26.* which the heathen had a superstitious regard to. (2.) The sanctuary must be revered; great care must be taken to approach the tabernacle with that purity and preparation which the law required, and to attend there with that humility, decency, and closeness of application, which became them in the immediate presence of such an awful majesty. Though now there is no place holy by divine institution, as the tabernacle and temple then were, yet this obligeth us to respect the solemn assemblies of christians for religious worship, as being under a promise of Christ's special presence in them, and to carry our selves with a due decorum, while in those assemblies we attend the administration of holy ordinances, *Eccles. v. 1.* 2. A caution against all communion with witches, and those that were in league with familiar spirits; *Regard them not, seek not after them,* be not in fear of any evil from them, or in hopes of any good from them. Regard not their threatnings or promises, or predictions; seek not to them for discovery or advice, for if you do you are defiled by it, and rendred abominable both to God and your own consciences. This was the sin that compleated Saul's wickedness, for which he was rejected of God, *1 Chron. x. 13.* 3. A charge to young people to shew respect to the aged, *ver. 32.* *Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head.* Age is honourable, and he that is the Ancient of days requires that honour be paid to it. *The hoary head is a crown of glory.* Those whom God hath honoured with the common blessing of long life, we ought to honour with the distinguishing expressions of civility; and those that in age are wise and good, are worthy of double honour: more respect is owing to such old men, than merely to rise up before them; their credit and comfort must be carefully consulted, their experiences and observations improved, and their counsels asked and hearkened to, *Job xxxii. 6, 7.* Some by the old man, whose face or presence is to be honoured, understand the elder in office, as by the hoary head, the elder in age; both ought to be respected as fathers, and in the fear of God, who has put some of his honour upon both. Note, Religion teacheth good manners, and obligeth us to give honour to those to whom honour is due. It is an instance of great degeneracy and disorder in a land, when *the child behaves himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable,* *Isa. iii. 5.* Job

Job xxx. 1, 12. It becomes the aged to receive this honour, and the younger to give it; for it is the ornament as well as duty of their youth, to *order themselves lowly and reverently to all their betters*. 4. A charge to Israelites to be very tender of strangers, *ver. 33, 34*. Both the law of God and his providence had vastly dignified Israel above any other people, yet they must not therefore think themselves authorized to trample upon all mankind, but those of their own nation, and to insult them at their pleasure; but those of their own nation, and to insult them at their pleasure; no, *Thou shalt not vex a stranger, but love him as thy self*, and as one of thine own people. It is supposed that this stranger was not an idolater, but a worshipper of the God of Israel, though not circumcised; a proselyte of the gate at least, though not a proselyte of righteousness: if such a one sojourned among them, they must not vex him, nor oppress or over-reach him in a bargain, taking advantage of his ignorance of their laws and customs: they must reckon it as great a sin to cheat a stranger, as to cheat an Israelite; nay (say the Jewish doctors) they must not so much as upbraid him with his being a stranger, and his having been formerly an idolater. Strangers are God's particular care, as widows and fatherless are, because it is his honour to help the helpless, *Psal. cxlvi. 9*. it is therefore at our peril if we do them any wrong, or put any hardships upon them. Strangers shall be welcome to God's grace, and therefore we should do what we can to invite them to it, and to recommend religion to their good opinion. It argues a generous disposition, and a pious regard to God, as a common father, to be kind to strangers; for those of different countries, customs, and languages, yet are all made of one blood. But here is a reason added peculiar to the Jews, for *ye were strangers in the land of Egypt*. God then favoured you, therefore do you now favour the strangers; and do to them as you then wished to be done to. You were strangers, and yet are now thus highly advanced; therefore you know not what these strangers may come to, whom you are apt to despise. 5. Justice in weights and measures is here commanded. That there should be no cheat in them, *ver. 35*. That they should be very exact, *ver. 36*. In weighing and measuring, we pretend a design to give all those their own whom we deal with; but if the weights and measures be false, it is like a corruption in judgment, it cheats under colour of justice; and thus to deceive a man to his damage, is worse than picking his pocket, or robbing him on the high-way. He that sells is bound to give the full of the commodity, and he that buys the full of the price agreed upon, which cannot be done without just ballances, weights and measures. *Let no man go beyond or defraud his brother*, for though it be hid from man, it will be found that *God is the avenger of all such*.

Lastly, The chapter concludes with a general command, *ver. 37*. *Ye shall observe all my statutes and do them*. Note, 1. We are not likely to do God's statutes, unless we observe them, with great care and consideration. 2. Yet it is not enough barely to observe God's precepts, but we must make conscience of obeying them. What will it avail us to be critical in our notions, if we be not conscientious in our conversations. 3. An upright heart hath respect to all God's commandments, *Psal. cxix. 6*. Though in many instances the hand fails of doing what should be done, yet the eye observes all God's statutes. We are not allowed to pick and choose our duty, but must aim at standing compleat in all the will of God.

C H A P. XX.

The laws which before were made, are in this chapter repeated, and penalties annexed to them; that they who would not be deterred from sin by the fear of God, might be deterred from it by the fear of punishment. If we will not avoid such and such practices because the law has made them sin, (and it is most acceptable, when we go upon that principle of religion) sure we will avoid them when the law has made them death, from a principle of self-preservation. In this chapter we have, 1. Many particular crimes that are made capital, 1. Giving their children to Moloch, *ver. 1—5*. 2. Consulting witches, *ver. 6, 27*. 3. Cursing parents, *ver. 9*. 4. Adultery, *ver. 10*. 5. Incest, *ver. 11, 12, 14, 17, 19, 20, 21*. 6. Unnatural lusts, *ver. 13, 15, 16, 18*. 2. General commands given to be holy, *ver. 7, 8, 22—26*.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Again thou shalt say to the children of Israel, Whosoever he be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth any of his seed unto Moloch, he shall surely be put to death: the people of the land shall stone him with stones. 3. And I will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people: because he hath given of his seed unto Moloch, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name. 4. And if the people of the land do any ways hide their eyes from the man, when he giveth of his seed unto Moloch, and kill him not: 5. Then I will set my face against that man, and against his family, and will

cut him off, and all that go a whoring after him, to commit whoredom with Moloch, from among their people. 6. ¶ And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people. 7. ¶ Sanctify your selves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God. 8. And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I am the LORD which sanctify you. 9. ¶ For every one that curseth his father or his mother, shall be surely put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother, his blood shall be upon him.

Moses is here directed to say that again to the children of Israel, which he had in effect said before, *ver. 2*. We are sure it was no vain repetition, but very necessary, that they might give the more earnest heed to the things that were spoken, and might believe them to be of great consequence, being so often inculcated. *God speaketh once, yea twice*, and what he orders to be said again, we must be willing to hear again, because *for us it is safe*, *Phil. iii. 1*.

Three sins are in these verses threatened with death.

1. Parents abusing their children, by sacrificing them to Moloch, *ver. 2, 3*. There is the grossest absurdity that can be in all idolatry, and it is a great reproach to mens reason, but none trampled upon all the honours of the human nature so as this did, the burning of their children in the fire to the honour of a dung-hill god. It was a plain evidence that their gods were devils, which desired and delighted in the misery and ruin of mankind, and that the worshippers were worse than the beasts that perish, perfectly stripped not only of reason but of natural affection. Abraham's offering Isaac could not give countenance, much less could it give rise, to this barbarous practice; since though that was commanded, it was immediately countermanded. Yet such was the power of the god of this world over the children of disobedience, that this prodigious piece of inhumanity was generally practised; and even the Israelites were in danger of being drawn into it, which made it necessary that this severe law should be made against it. It was not enough to tell them they might spare their children, the fruit of their body should never be accepted for the sin of their soul; but they must be told, 1. That the criminal himself should be put to death, as a murderer, *The people of the land shall stone him with stones*, *ver. 2*. which was looked upon as the worst of capital punishments among the Jews. If the children were sacrificed to the malice of the devil, the parents must be sacrificed to the justice of God. And if either the fact could not be proved, or the magistrates did not do their duty, God would take the work into his own hands, *ver. 3*. *I will cut him off*. Note, Those that escape punishment from men, yet shall not escape the righteous judgments of God; so wretchedly do they deceive themselves, that promise themselves impunity in sin. How can they escape, against whom God sets his face, *i. e.* whom he frowns upon, meets as an enemy, and fights against? The heinousness of the crime is here set forth to justify the doom, it *defiles the sanctuary*, and *profanes the holy name* of God, for the honour of both which he is jealous. Observe, The malignity of the sin is laid upon that in it, which was peculiar to Israel; when the Gentiles sacrificed their children, they were guilty of murder and idolatry; but if Israelites did it, they incurred the additional guilt of *defiling the sanctuary*, which they attended upon, even when they lay under this guilt, as if there might be an agreement between the temple of God, and idols, and of *profaning the holy name of God*, by which they were called, as if he allowed his worshippers to do such things, *Rom. ii. 23, 24*. 2. That all his aiders and abettors should be cut off likewise, by the righteous hand of God. If his neighbours concealed him, and would not come in as witnesses against him; if the magistrates connived at him, and would not pass sentence upon him, rather pitying his folly than hating his impiety, God himself would reckon with them, *ver. 4, 5*. Misprision of idolatry is a crime conusable in the court of heaven, and which shall not go unpunished. *I will set my face against that man*, (that magistrate, *Jer. v. 1*.) and *against his family*. Note, 1. The wickedness of the master of a family often brings ruin upon a family; and he that should be the house-keeper, proves the house-breaker. 2. If magistrates will not do justice upon offenders, God will do justice upon them; because there is danger that many will go a whoring after them, that do but countenance sin, by winking at it. And if the sins of leaders be leading sins, it is fit their punishments should be exemplary punishments.

2. Childrens abusing their parents, by cursing them, *ver. 9*. If children either speak ill of their parents, or wish ill to them, or carry it scornfully or spitefully towards them, it was an iniquity to be punished by the judges, who were employed as conservators both of God's honour, and of the publick peace, which were both attempted by this unnatural insolence; see *Prov. xxx. 17*. *The eye that mocks at his father, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out*; which intimates, that such wicked children were in a fair way to be not only hanged, but hanged in chains. This law of Moses Christ quotes and confirms, *Mat. xv. 4*. for it is as direct a breach

of the fifth commandment, as wilful murder is of the sixth. The same law which requires parents to be tender of their children, requires children to be respectful to their parents. He that despitefully useth his parents, the instruments of his being, flies in the face of God himself, the author of his being, who will not see the paternal dignity and authority insulted and trampled upon.

3. Persons abusing themselves, by consulting such as have *familiar spirits*, ver. 6. By this, as much as any thing, a man doth diminish, disparage, and deceive himself, and so abuse himself. What greater madness can there be than for a man to go to a liar for information, and to an enemy for advice? They do so, who turn after them that deal in the black art, and know the depths of Satan. This is spiritual adultery as much as idolatry is, giving that honour to the devil, which is due to God only; and the jealous God will give a bill of divorce to those that thus *go a whoring from him*, and will *cut them off*, they having first cut themselves off from him.

In the midst of these particular laws comes in that general charge, ver. 7, 8. where we have, 1. The duties required; and they are two. 1. That in our principles, affections, and aims, we be holy; *Sanctify your selves, and be ye holy*. We must cleanse our selves from all the pollutions of sin, consecrate our selves to the service and honour of God, and conform our selves in every thing to his holy will and image: this is to *sanctify our selves*. 2. That in all our actions, and in the whole course of our conversation, we be obedient to the laws of God; *Ye shall keep my statutes*. By this only we can make it to appear that we have sanctified our selves, and are holy, even by our keeping God's commandments, *the tree is known by its fruits*. Nor can we *keep God's statutes*, as we ought, unless we first *sanctify our selves, and be holy*. Make the tree good, and the fruit will be good. 2. The reasons to enforce these duties. 1. *I am the Lord your God*. Therefore be holy, that you may resemble him whose people you are, and may be pleasing to him. Holiness becomes his house and household. 2. *I am the Lord which sanctify you*. God sanctified them by peculiar privileges, laws and favours, which distinguished them from all other nations, and dignified them as a people set apart for God. He gave them his word and ordinances to be means of their sanctification, and his good Spirit to instruct them, therefore they must be holy, else they received the grace of God herein in vain. Note, 1. God's people are and must be persons of distinction. God has distinguished them by his holy covenant, and therefore they ought to distinguish themselves by their holy conversations. 2. God's sanctifying us is a good reason why we should sanctify our selves, that we may comply with the designs of his grace, and not walk contrary to them. If it be the Lord that sanctifies us, we may hope the work shall be done, though it be difficult: the manner of expression is like that, 2 Cor. v. 5. *He that hath wrought us to the self same thing is God*. And his grace is so far from superseding our care and endeavour, that it doth most strongly engage and encourage it. *Work out your salvation, for it is God that worketh in you*.

10. ¶ And the man that committeth adultery with another mans wife: even he that committeth adultery with his neighbours wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death. 11. And the man that lieth with his fathers wife, hath uncovered his fathers nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. 12. And if a man lie with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death: they have wrought confusion: their blood shall be upon them. 13. If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination, they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. 14. And if a man take a wife and her mother, it is wickedness: they shall be burnt with fire, both he and they, that there be no wickedness among you. 15. And if a man lie with a beast, he shall surely be put to death: and ye shall slay the beast. 16. And if a woman approach unto any beast, and lie down thereto, thou shalt kill the woman and the beast: they shall surely be put to death, their blood shall be upon them. 17. And if a man shall take his sister, his fathers daughter, or his mothers daughter, and see her nakedness, and she see his nakedness, it is a wicked thing, and they shall be cut off in the sight of their people: he hath uncovered his sisters nakedness, he shall bear his iniquity. 18. And if a man shall lie with a woman having her sickness, and shall uncover her nakedness; he hath discovered her fountain, and she hath uncovered the fountain of her blood: and both of them shall be cut off from among their people. 19. And thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy mothers sister, nor of thy fathers sister: for he uncovereth his near kin: they shall bear their iniquity. 20. And if a man shall lie with his uncles

wife, he hath uncovered his uncles nakedness: they shall bear their sin, they shall die childless. 21. And if a man shall take his brothers wife, it is an unclean thing: he hath uncovered his brothers nakedness, they shall be childless.

Sins against the seventh commandment are here ordered to be severely punished. These are sins which, of all other, souls are most apt to make a mock at; but God would teach those the heinousness of the guilt by the extremity of the punishment, that would not otherwise be taught it.

1. Lying with another man's wife was made a capital crime; the adulterer and the adulteress that had joined in the sin, must fall alike under the sentence; they shall both be *put to death*, ver. 10. Long before this, even in Job's time, this was reputed a *heinous crime*, and an *iniquity to be punished by the judges*, Job xxxi. 11. It is a presumptuous contempt of an ordinance of God, and a violation of his covenant, Prov. ii. 17. It is an irreparable wrong to the injured husband; and debaucheth the mind and conscience of both the offenders themselves, as much as any thing. It is a sin which head-strong and unbridled lusts hurry men violently to, and therefore it needs such a powerful restraint as this: it is a sin which defiles a land, and brings down God's judgments upon it, which disquiets families, and tends to the ruin of all virtue and religion, and therefore is fit to be animadverted upon by the conservators of the publick peace: but see John viii. 11.

2. Incestuous copulations, whether by marriage or not.

(1.) Some of them were to be punished with death, as a man's lying with his father's wife, ver. 11. Reuben had been put to death for his crime, Gen. xxxv. 22. if this law had been then made. It was the sin of the incestuous Corinthian, for which he was to be *delivered unto Satan*, 1 Cor. v. 1, 5. A man's debauching his daughter-in-law, or his mother-in-law, or his sister, was likewise to be punished with death, ver. 12, 14, 17.

(2.) Others of them God would punish with the curse of barrenness, as a man's defiling his aunt, or his brother's wife, ver. 19, 20, 21. *they shall die childless*. Those that keep not within the divine rules of marriage, forfeit the blessings of marriage; *They shall commit whoredom, and shall not encrease*, Hof. iv. 10. Nay, it is said, *They shall bear their iniquity*, i. e. though they be not immediately cut off by the hand either of God or man for this sin, yet the guilt of it shall lie upon them, to be reckoned for another day, and not to be purged with sacrifice or offering.

3. The unnatural lusts of sodomy and bestiality (sins not to be mentioned without horror) were to be punished with death, as they are at this day by our law, ver. 13, 15, 16. Even the beast that was thus abused was to be killed with the sinner, who was thereby openly put to the greater shame: and the villainy was thus represented, as in the highest degree execrable and abominable, all occasions of the remembrance or mention of it being to be taken away. Even the unseasonable use of the marriage-bed, if presumptuous, and in contempt of the law, would expose the offenders to the just judgment of God, *they shall be cut off*, ver. 18. For this is the will of God that *every man should possess his vessel* (and the wife is called, the weaker vessel) *in sanctification and honour*, as becomes saints.

22. ¶ Ye shall therefore keep all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them, that the land whither I bring you to dwell therein, spue you not out. 23. And ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation, which I cast out before you: for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them. 24. But I have said unto you, Ye shall inherit their land, and I will give it unto you to possess it, a land that floweth with milk and honey: I am the LORD your God which have separated you from other people. 25. Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean: and ye shall not make your souls abominable by beast or by fowl, or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean. 26. And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine. 27. ¶ A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them.

The last verse is a particular law, which comes in after the general conclusion, as if omitted in its proper place; it is for the putting of those to death that dealt with familiar spirits, ver. 27. It would be a great affront to God, and to his lively oracles, a scandal to the country, and a temptation to ignorant ill people, to consult them, if such were known, and suffered to live among them. They that are in league with the devil, have in effect made a covenant with death, and an agreement with hell, and so shall their doom be.

The rest of these verses repeat and inculcate what had been said before, for to that unthinking forgetful people it was requisite there should be line upon line; and that general rules with their reasons should be frequently insisted on, for the enforcement of particular laws, and making them more effectual. Three things are here minded of.

1. Their dignity. (1.) They had the *Lord for their God*, ver. 24. They were his, his care, his choice, his treasure, his jewels, his kingdom of priests, ver. 26. *that ye should be mine*. Happy the people, and truly great, that is in such a case. (2.) Their God was a holy God, ver. 26. infinitely advanced above all others. His holiness is his glory, and it was their honour to be related to him, while their neighbours were the infamous worshippers of impure and filthy spirits. (3.) The great God had separated them from other people, ver. 24. and again, ver. 26. Other nations were the common, they were the inclosure, beautified and enriched with peculiar privileges, and designed for peculiar honours, let them therefore value themselves accordingly; preserve their honour, and not lay it in the dust, by walking in the way of the heathen.

2. Their duty; this is inferred from their dignity: God had done more for them than for others, and therefore expected more from them than from others. And what is it that the Lord their God requires in consideration of the great things done and designed?

(1.) *Ye shall keep all my statutes*, ver. 22. and all the reason in the world they should, for the statutes were their honour, and obedience to them would be their lasting comfort. (2.) *Ye shall not walk in the manners of the nations*, ver. 23. Being separated from them they must not associate with them, nor learn their way. The manners of the nations were ill enough in them, but would be much worse in God's people. (3.) *Ye shall put difference between clean and unclean*, ver. 25. This is holiness to discern between things that differ, not to live at large, as if we might say and do any thing, but to speak and act with caution. (4.) *Ye shall not make your souls abominable*, ver. 25. Our constant care must be to preserve the honour, by preserving the purity, of our own souls, and never to do any thing to make them abominable to God, and to our own consciences.

3. Their danger. (1.) They were going into an infected place, ver. 24. *Ye shall inherit their land*. A land flowing indeed with milk and honey, which they would have the comfort of, if they kept their integrity; but withal, it was a land full of idols, idolatries, and superstitious usages, which they would be apt to fall in love with, having brought from Egypt with them a strange disposition to take that infection. (2.) If they took the infection, it would be of pernicious consequence to them. The Canaanites were to be expelled for these very sins; *they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them*, ver. 23. See what an evil thing sin is, it provokes God to abhor his own creatures, whereas otherwise he delights in the work of his hands. And if the Israelites trod in the steps of their impiety, they must expect that the land would spue them out too, ver. 22. as he had told them before, chap. xviii. 28. If God spared not the natural branches, but broke them off, neither would he spare these who were grafted in, if they degenerated. Thus the rejection of the Jews stands for a warning to all Christian churches to take heed lest the kingdom of God be taken from them. Those that sin like others must expect to smart like them, and their profession of relation to God will be no security to them.

C H A P. XXI.

This chapter might borrow its title from Mal. ii. 1. And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. *It is a law obliging priests with the utmost care and jealousy, to preserve the dignity of their priesthood*. 1. *The inferior priests are here charged both concerning their mourning, and concerning their marriages, and their children*, ver. 1—9. 2. *The high priest is restrained more than any of them*, ver. 10—15. 3. *Neither the one nor the other must have any blemish*, ver. 16—24.

1. **A**N D the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto the priests the sons of Aaron, and say unto them, There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people. 2. But for his kin, that is near unto him, *that is*, for his mother, and for his father, and for his son, and for his daughter, and for his brother. 3. And for his sister a virgin, that is nigh unto him, which hath had no husband: for her may he be defiled. 4. *But he shall not defile himself, being a chief man among his people, to profane himself*. 5. They shall not make baldness upon their head, neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard, nor make any cuttings in their flesh. 6. They shall be holy unto their God, and not profane the name of their God: for the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and the bread of their God they do offer: therefore they shall be holy. 7. They shall not take a wife *that is* a whore, or profane; neither shall they take a woman put

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away from her husband: for he is holy unto his God. 8. Thou shalt sanctify him therefore, for he offereth the bread of thy God: he shall be holy unto thee: for I the LORD which sanctify you, *am* holy. 9. ¶ And the daughter of any priest, if she profane herself by playing the whore, she profaneth her father: she shall be burnt with fire.

It was before appointed that the priests should teach the people the statutes God had given concerning the *difference between clean and unclean*, chap. x. 10, 11. Now here it is provided, that they should observe themselves what they were to teach the people. Note, They whose office it is to instruct, must do it by example as well as precept, 1 Tim. iv. 12. The priests were to draw nearer to God than any of the people, and to be more intimately conversant with sacred things, and therefore it was required of them that they should keep at a greater distance than others from every thing that was defiling, and might diminish the honour of their priesthood.

1. They must take care not to disparage themselves in their mourning for the dead. All that mourned for the dead were supposed to come near the body, if not to touch it: and the Jews say, it made a man ceremonially unclean, to come within six foot of a dead corps; nay, it is declared, *Numb. xix. 14.* that all that come into the tent where the dead body lies, shall be unclean seven days. Therefore all the mourners that attended the funeral could not but defile themselves, so as not to be fit to come into the sanctuary for seven days: for this reason it is ordered,

(1.) That the priests should never put themselves under this incapacity of coming into the sanctuary, unless it were for one of their nearest relations, ver. 1, 2, 3. He was permitted to do it for a parent or a child, for a brother, or an unmarried sister, and therefore no doubt (though not mentioned) for the wife of his bosom; for Ezekiel a priest had mourned for his wife, if he had not been particularly prohibited, *Ezek. xxiv. 17.* By this allowance God put an honour upon natural affection, and favoured it so far, as to dispense with the attendance of his servants for seven days, while they indulged themselves in their sorrow for the death of their dear relations; but longer than so weeping must not hinder sowing, nor their affection to their relations take them off from the service of the sanctuary. Nor was it at all allowed for the death of any other, no not of a *chief man among the people*, as some read it, ver. 4. They must not defile themselves, no not for the high priest himself, unless thus akin to them. Though *there is a friend that is nearer than a brother*, yet the priests must not pay this respect to the best friend they had, but a relation, lest if it were allowed for one, others would expect it, and so they should be frequently taken off from their work: and it is hereby intimated, that there is a particular affection to be reserved for those that are thus near akin to us; and when any such are removed by death, we ought to be affected with it, and lay it to heart, as the near approach of death to our selves, and an alarm to us to prepare to follow.

(2.) That they must not be extravagant in the expressions of their mourning, no not for their dearest relations, ver. 5. Their mourning must not be either, (1.) Superstitious, according to the manner of the heathen, who cut off their hair, and let out their blood, in honour of the imaginary deities, which presided (they thought) in the congregation of the dead, that they might engage them to be propitious to their departed friends. Even the superstitious rites used of old at funerals, are an indication of the ancient belief of the immortality of the soul, and its existence in a separate state: and though the rites themselves were forbidden by the divine law; because they were performed to false Gods; yet the decent respect which nature teaches, and the law allows, to be paid to the remains of our deceased friends, shews, that we are not to look upon them as lost. Nor, (2.) must it be passionate or immoderate. Note, God's ministers must be examples to others of patience under affliction, particularly that which toucheth in a very tender part, the death of their near relations. They are supposed to know more than others of the reasons why we must *not* sorrow, *as those that have no hope*, 1 Thess. iv. 13. and therefore they ought to be eminently calm and composed, that they may be able to comfort others with the same comforts wherewith they are themselves comforted of God. The people were forbidden thus to *mourn for the dead*, chap. xix. 27, 28. and what was unlawful to them, was much more unlawful to the priest. The reason given for their peculiar care not to defile themselves, we have, ver. 6. *because they offered the bread of their God, even the offerings of the Lord made by fire*, which were the provisions of God's house and table. They are highly honoured, and therefore must not stain their honour, by making themselves slaves to their passions; they are continually employed in sacred service, and therefore must not be either diverted from, or disfigured for, the services they were called to. If they pollute themselves, they profane the name of their God on whom they attend: if the servants be rude and of ill behaviour, it is a reflection upon the master, as if he kept a loose and disorderly house. Note, All that either offer or eat the bread of our God, must be holy in all manner of conversation, or else they profane that name which they pretend to sanctify.

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2. They must take care not to disparage themselves in their marriage, *ver. 7.* A priest must not marry a woman of ill fame, that either had been guilty, or was suspected to have been guilty of uncleanness. He must not only not marry a whore, though never so great a penitent for her former whoredoms, but he must not marry one that was profane, *i. e.* of a light carriage or indecent behaviour. Nay, he must not marry one that was divorced, because there was reason to think it was for some fault she was divorced. The priests were forbidden to undervalue themselves by such marriages as these, which were allowed to others, (1.) Lest it should bring a present reproach upon their ministry, harden the profane in their profaneness, and grieve the hearts of a serious people: the New Testament gives laws to ministers wives, *1 Tim. iii. 11.* that they be *grave and sober, that the ministry be not blamed.* (2.) Lest it should entail a reproach upon their families; for the work and honour of the priesthood was to descend as an inheritance to their children after them. Those do not consult the good of their posterity as they ought, who do not take care to marry those that are of good report and character. He that would seek a godly seed, (as the expression is, *Mal. ii. 15.*) must first seek a godly wife, and take heed of a corruption of blood.

It is added here, *ver. 8.* *Thou shalt sanctify him, and he shall be holy unto thee.* Not only thou, O Moses, by taking care that these laws be observed, but thou, O Israel, by all endeavours possible to keep up the reputation of the priesthood, which the priests themselves must do nothing to expose or forfeit. *He is holy to his God, ver. 7.* therefore *he shall be holy unto thee.* Note, We must honour those whom our God puts honour upon. Gospel ministers by this rule are to be *esteemed very highly in love for their works sake, 1 Thess. v. 13.* and every christian must look upon himself as concerned to be the guardian of their honour.

3. Their children must be afraid of doing any thing to disparage them, *ver. 9.* *If the daughter of any priest play the whore, her crime is great; she not only polluteth, but profaneth her self:* other women have not that honour to lose that she hath; who, as one of a priest's family, hath eaten of the holy things, and is supposed to have been better educated than others. Nay, *she profaneth her father,* he is reflected upon, and every body will be ready to ask, *Why did not he teach her better?* And the sinners in Sion will insult and say, *Here is your priest's daughter: her punishment therefore must be peculiar, She shall be burnt with fire, for terror to all priests daughters.* Note, The children of ministers ought of all others to take heed of doing any thing that is scandalous, because in them it is doubly scandalous, and will be punished accordingly by him whose name is Jealous.

10. And *he that is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor rent his clothes.* 11. Neither shall he go in to any dead body, nor defile himself for his father or for his mother. 12. Neither shall he go out of the sanctuary, nor profane the sanctuary of his God; for the crown of the anointing oil of his God is upon him: *I am the LORD.* 13. And he shall take a wife in her virginity. 14. A widow, or a divorced woman, or profane, or an harlot, these shall he not take: but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife. 15. Neither shall he profane his seed among his people: for *I the LORD do sanctify him.*

More was expected from a priest than from other people, but more from the high priest than from other priests, because upon his head the anointing oil was poured, and he was consecrated to put on the garments, *ver. 10.* both which were typical of the anointing and adorning of the Lord Jesus, with all the gifts and graces of the holy Spirit, which he received without measure. It is called *the crown of the anointing oil of his God, ver. 12.* for the anointing of the Spirit is to all that have it, a crown of glory, and a diadem of beauty. The high priest being thus dignified,

1. He must not defile himself at all for the dead, no not for his nearest relations, *his father or his mother,* much less his child or brother, *ver. 11.* (1.) He must not use the common expressions of sorrow on those occasions, such as *uncovering his head, and rending his clothes,* *ver. 10.* so perfectly unconcerned must he shew himself in all the crosses and comforts of this life: even his natural affection must be swallowed up in compassion to the ignorant, and a feeling of their infirmities, and a tender concern for the household of God, which he was made the ruler of. Thus being the holy one that was intrusted with the *Thummim and the Urim,* he must not know *father or mother,* *Deut. xxxiii. 8, 9.* (2.) He must not go in to any dead body, *ver. 11.* If any of the inferior priests were under a ceremonial pollution, there were other priests that might supply their places, but if the high priest were defiled, there would be a greater misfortune of him. And the forbidding of him to go to any house of mourning, or attend any funeral, would be an indication to the people of the greatness of that dignity to which he was advanced. Our Lord Jesus, the great high priest of our profession, touched the dead body of Jarius's daughter, the bier of

the widow's son, and the grave of Lazarus, to shew that he came to alter the property of death, and to take off the terror of it, by breaking the power of it. Now it cannot destroy, it doth not defile. (3.) He must not go out of the sanctuary, *ver. 12. i. e.* whenever he was attending or officiating in the sanctuary, where usually he tarried in his own apartment all day, he must not go out upon any occasion whatsoever; nor cut short his attendance on the living God, no not to pay his last respects to a dying relation. It was a profanation of the sanctuary to leave it so long as his presence was requisite there, upon any such occasion; for thereby he preferred some other business before the service of God, and the business of his profession, to which he ought to make every thing else truckle. Thus our Lord Jesus would not leave off preaching to go *to speak with his mother and brethren,* *Matt. xii. 48.*

2. He might not marry a widow (as other priests might) much less one divorced, or a harlot, *ver. 13, 14.* The reason of this was to put a difference between him and other priests in this matter; and (as some suggest) that he might be a type of Christ, to whom the church was to be presented a *chaste virgin,* *2 Cor. xi. 12.* see *Ezek. xlv. 22.* Christ must have our first love, our pure love, our intire love; thus *the virgins love thee,* *Cant. i. 3.* and such only are fit to follow the Lamb, *Rev. xiv. 4.*

3. He might not profane his seed among his people, *ver. 15.* Some understand it as forbidding him to marry any of an inferior rank, which would be a disparagement to his family. Jehoiada indeed married out of his own tribe, but then it was into the royal family, *2 Chron. xxii. 11.* This was not to teach him to be proud, but to teach him to be pure, and to do nothing unbecoming his office, and that worthy name by which he was called. Or it may be a caution to him in disposing of his children: he must not profane his seed, by marrying them unsuitably. Ministers children are profaned, if they be unequally yoked with unbelievers.

16. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 17. Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever *he be* of thy seed in their generations, that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God: 18. For whatsoever man *he be* that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or any thing superfluous. 19. Or a man that is broken-footed, or broken-handed. 20. Or crook-backed, or a dwarf, or that hath a blemish in his eye, or be scurvy, or scabbed, or hath his stones broken. 21. No man that hath a blemish, of the seed of Aaron the priest, shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the LORD made by fire; he hath a blemish, he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God. 22. He shall eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy, and of the holy. 23. Only he shall not go in unto the vail, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish; that he profane not my sanctuaries: for *I the LORD do sanctify them.* 24. And Moses told it unto Aaron, and to his sons, and unto all the children of Israel.

The priesthood being confined to one particular family, and entailed upon all the issue-male of that family throughout their generations, it was very likely that some or other in after-ages, that were born to the priesthood, would have natural blemishes and deformities: the honour of the priesthood would not secure them from any of these calamities which are common to men. Divers blemishes are here instanced in; some that were ordinarily for life, as blindness; others that might be for a time, as a scurf or scab; and when they were gone, the disability ceased.

Now the law concerning priests that had blemishes, was, 1. That they might live upon the altar, *ver. 22.* *He shall eat* of the sacrifices with the other priests; even the *most holy things,* such as the shew-bread, and the sin-offerings, as well as the *holy things,* such as the tithes and first-fruits, and the priest's share of the peace-offerings. The blemishes were such as they could not help, and therefore though they might not work, yet they must not starve. Note, None must be abused for their natural infirmities. Even the deformed child in the family must have its child's part.

2. Yet they must not serve at the altar, at either of the altars, nor be admitted to attend or assist the other priests in offering sacrifice, or burning incense, *ver. 7, 21, 23.* Great men choose to have such servants about them as are slightly, and therefore it was fit the great God should have such in his house, then, when he was pleased to manifest his glory in external indications of it. But it was especially requisite that comely men should be chosen to minister about holy things, for the sake of the people, who were apt to judge according to outward appearance; and to think meanly of the service, how honourable soever it was made by the divine institution, if those that performed it looked despicably, or went about it awkwardly. This provision God made for the preserving of the reputation of his altar, that it might not at any time fall under contempt. It was for the credit of the sanctuary, that none should appear there that were any way disfigured, either by nature or accident.

Now under the gospel, 1. Those that labour under any such blemishes as these, have reason to thank God that they are not thereby excluded from offering spiritual sacrifices to God; nor, if otherwise qualified for it, from the office of the ministry. There is many a healthful beautiful soul lodged in a crazy deformed body. 2. We ought to infer from hence, how incapable those are to serve God acceptably, whose minds are blemished and deformed by any reigning vice. Those are unworthy to be called christians, and unfit to be employed as ministers, that are spiritually blind, and lame, and crooked; whose sins render them scandalous and deformed, so as that the offerings of the Lord are abhorred for their sakes. The deformities of Hophni and Phinehas were worse than any of the blemishes here mentioned. Let such therefore who are openly vicious, be, as polluted, put from the priesthood; and let all that are made to our God spiritual priests, be before him *holy, and without blemish*; and comfort themselves with this, that though in this imperfect state they have spots that are the spots of God's children; yet they shall shortly appear before the throne of God *without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing*.

C H A P. XXII.

In this chapter we have divers laws concerning the priests and sacrifices, all for the preserving the honour of the sanctuary. 1. That the priests should not eat of the holy things in their uncleanness, ver. 1—9. 2. That no stranger that did not belong to some family of the priests should eat of the holy things, ver. 10—13. and if he did it unwittingly, he must make restitution, ver. 14—16. 3. That the sacrifices that were offered must be without blemish, ver. 17—25. 4. That they must be more than eight days old, ver. 26—28. And that the sacrifices of thanksgiving must be eaten the same day they were offered, ver. 29—33.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Speak unto Aaron, and to his sons, that they separate themselves from the holy things of the children of Israel, and that they profane not my holy name, in those things which they hallow unto me: I am the LORD. 3. Say unto them, Whosoever he be of all your seed, among your generations, that goeth unto the holy things which the children of Israel hallow unto the LORD, having his uncleanness upon him, that soul shall be cut off from my presence: I am the LORD. 4. What man soever of the seed of Aaron is a leper, or hath a running issue, he shall not eat of the holy things, until he be clean. And whoso toucheth any thing that is unclean by the dead, or a man whose seed goeth from him: 5. Or whosoever toucheth any creeping thing, whereby he may be made unclean, or a man of whom he may take uncleanness, whatsoever uncleanness he hath: 6. The soul which hath touched any such, shall be unclean until even, and shall not eat of the holy things, unless he wash his flesh with water. 7. And when the sun is down, he shall be clean, and shall afterward eat of the holy things, because it is his food. 8. That which dieth of it self, or is torn with beasts, he shall not eat to defile himself therewith: I am the LORD. 9. They shall therefore keep mine ordinance, lest they bear sin for it, and die therefore, if they profane it: I the LORD do sanctify them.

Those that had a natural blemish, though they were forbidden to do the priests work, yet they were allowed to eat of the holy things; and the Jewish writers say, that to keep them from idleness, they were employed in the wood-room, to pick out that which was worm-eaten, that it might not be used in the fire upon the altar; they might also be employed in the judgment of leprosy: but those that were under any ceremonial uncleanness, which possibly they contracted by their own fault, might not so much as eat of the holy things while they continued in their pollution. 1. Some pollutions were permanent, as a leprosy, or a running issue, ver. 4. These separated the people from the sanctuary, and God would shew that they were so far from being more excusable; that really they were more abominable in a priest. 2. Others were more transient, as the touching of a dead body, or any thing else that was unclean, from which after a certain time a man was cleansed by bathing his flesh in water, ver. 6. But whoever was thus defiled, might not eat of the holy things, under pain of God's highest displeasure, who hath said it and ratified it, *that soul shall be cut off from my presence*, ver. 3. Our being in the presence of God, and attending upon him, will be so far from securing us, that it will but the more expose us to God's wrath, if we dare to draw nigh to him in our uncleanness. The destruction shall come from the presence of the Lord, 2 Thess. i. 9. as the fire by which Nadab and Abihu died came from before the Lord. Thus they who profane the holy word of God, will be cut off by that word they make so light of; it shall condemn

them. They are again warned of their danger, if they eat of the holy things in their uncleanness, ver. 9. *lest they bear sin, and die therefore*. Note, 1. Those contract great guilt that profane sacred things, by touching them with unhallowed hands. Eating the holy things signified an interest in the atonement, but if they eat of them in their uncleanness, they were so far from lessening their guilt that they increased it; they shall bear sin. 2. Sin is a burthen that, if infinite mercy prevent not, will certainly sink those that bear it; they shall die therefore. Even priests may be ruined by their pollutions and presumptions.

Now, 1. This obliged the priests carefully to preserve their purity, and to dread every thing that would defile them. The holy things were their livelihood; if they might not eat of them, how must they subsist? The more we have to lose of comfort and honour by our defilement, the more careful we should be to preserve our purity. 2. This possessed the people with a reverence for the holy things, when they saw the priests themselves separated from them (as the expression is, ver. 2.) so long as they were in their uncleanness. He is doubtless a God of infinite purity, who kept his immediate attendants under so strict a discipline. 3. This teaches us carefully to watch against all moral pollutions, because by them we are dis fitted to receive the comfort of God's sanctuary. Though we labour not under habitual deformities, yet actual defilements deprive us of the pleasure of communion with God; and therefore he that is washed needeth to wash his feet, Joh. xiii. 10. to wash his hands, and so to compass the altar, Psal. xxvi. 6. Herein we have need to be jealous over our selves, lest (as it is observably expressed here) we profane God's holy name in those things which we hallow unto him, ver. 2. If we affront God in those very performances wherein we pretend to honour him, and provoke him instead of pleasing him, we shall make up but an ill account shortly; yet thus we do if we profane God's name, by doing that in our uncleanness which pretends to be hallowed to him.

10. There shall no stranger eat of the holy thing: a sojourner of the priests, or an hired servant shall not eat of the holy thing. 11. But if the priest buy any soul with his money, he shall eat of it, and he that is born in his house: they shall eat of his meat. 12. If the priests daughter also be married unto a stranger, she may not eat of an offering of the holy things. 13. But if the priests daughter be a widow, or divorced, and have no child, and is returned unto her fathers house, as in her youth, she shall eat of her fathers meat, but there shall no stranger eat thereof. 14. ¶ And if a man eat of the holy thing unwittingly, then he shall put the fifth part thereof unto it, and shall give it unto the priest, with the holy thing. 15. And they shall not profane the holy things of the children of Israel, which they offer unto the LORD: 16. Or suffer them to bear the iniquity of trespass, when they eat their holy things: for I the LORD do sanctify them.

The holy things were to be eaten by the priests and their families. Now, 1. Here is a law that no stranger should eat of them, that is, no person whatsoever but the priests only, and those that pertained to them, ver. 10. The priests are charged with this care, not to profane the holy things, by permitting strangers to eat of them, (ver. 15.) or suffer them to bear the iniquity of trespass, ver. 16. i. e. suffer them to bring guilt upon themselves, by meddling with that which they have no right to. Thus it is commonly understood. Note, We must not only be careful that we do not bear iniquity our selves, but we must do what we can to prevent others bearing it. We must not only not suffer sin to lie upon our brother, but if we can help it, we must not suffer it to come upon him. But perhaps there is another meaning of those words: the priests eating of the sin-offerings is said to signify their bearing the iniquity of the congregation to make atonement for them, chap. x. 17. Let not a stranger therefore eat of that holy thing particularly, and so pretend to bear the iniquity of trespass; for it is daring presumption for any to do that, but such as are appointed to do it. Those that set up other mediators besides Christ our priest, to bear the iniquity of trespass, sacrilegiously rob Christ of his honour, and invade his rights. When we warn people not to trust to their own righteousness, nor dare to appear before God in it, but to rely on Christ's righteousness only for peace and pardon, it is because we dare not suffer them to bear the iniquity of trespass, for we know it is too heavy for them. 2. Here is an explication of the law, shewing who were to be looked upon as belonging to the priest's family, and who not. (1.) Sojourners and hired servants abode not in the house for ever, were in the family but not of it, and therefore they might not eat of the holy things, ver. 10. but the servant that was born in the house, or bought with money, being an heirloom to the family, though a servant, yet might eat of the holy things, ver. 11. Note, Those only are entitled to the comforts of God's house that make it their rest for ever, and resolve to dwell in it all the days of their life. As for those that for a time only

only believe, to serve a present turn, they are looked upon but as sojourners and mercenaries, and have *no part nor lot in the matter*. (2.) As to the children of the family, concerning the sons there could be no dispute, they were themselves priests, but concerning the daughters there was a distinction. While they continued in their father's house they might eat of the holy things; but if they married such as were not priests, they lost their right, *ver. 12*. for now they were cut off from the family of the priests. Yet if a priest's daughter became a widow, and had no children in whom she might preserve a distinct family, and returned to her father's house again, being neither wife nor mother, she shall again be looked upon as a daughter, and shall eat of the holy things. If those whom providence had made sorrowful widows, and who are dislodged from the rest they had in the house of a husband, yet find it again in a father's house, they have reason to be thankful to the widow's God, who doth not leave them comfortless. 3. Here is a demand of restitution to be made by him that had no right to the holy things, and yet should eat of them unwittingly, *ver. 14*. If he did it presumptuously, and in contempt of the divine institution, he was liable to be cut off by the hand of God, and to be beaten by the magistrate; but if he did it through weakness and inconsideration, he was to restore the value, adding a fifth part to it; besides which, he was to bring an offering to atone for the trespass; see *chap. v. 15, 16*.

Now, 1. This law might be dispensed with in a case of necessity, as it was when David and his men eat of the shew-bread, *1 Sam. xxi. 6*. And our Saviour justifies them, and gives a reason for it; which furnisheth us with a lasting rule in all such cases, that *God will have mercy and not sacrifice*, *Matt. xii. 3, 4, 7*. Rituals must give way to morals.

2. It is an instruction to gospel ministers, who are *stewards of the mysteries of God*, not to admit all, without distinction, to *eat of the holy things*, but to take out the precious from the vile. Those that are scandalously ignorant or profane, are strangers and aliens to the family of the Lord's priests; and it is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to such. Holy things are for holy persons, that at least are in profession so, *Matt. vii. 6*.

17. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 18. Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, and unto all the children of Israel, and say unto them, Whatsoever be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers in Israel, that will offer his oblation for all his vows, and for all his free-will offerings, which they will offer unto the LORD for a burnt-offering: 19. Ye shall offer at your own will a male without blemish of the beeves, of the sheep; or of the goats. 20. But whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer: for it shall not be acceptable for you. 21. And whosoever offereth a sacrifice of peace-offerings unto the LORD, to accomplish his vow, or a free-will offering in beeves, or sheep, it shall be perfect, to be accepted: there shall be no blemish therein. 22. Blind, or broken, or maimed, or having a wen, or scurvy, or scabbed, ye shall not offer these unto the LORD, nor make an offering by fire of them upon the altar unto the LORD. 23. Either a bullock, or a lamb that hath any thing superfluous or lacking in his parts, that mayest thou offer for a free-will offering; but for a vow it shall not be accepted. 24. Ye shall not offer unto the LORD that which is bruised, or crushed, or broken, or cut; neither shall you make any offering thereof in your land. 25. Neither from a strangers hands shall ye offer the bread of your God of any of these; because their corruption is in them, and blemishes be in them: they shall not be accepted for you. 26. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 27. When a bullock, or a sheep, or a goat is brought forth, then it shall be seven days under the dam: and from the eighth day and thenceforth, it shall be accepted for an offering made by fire unto the LORD. 28. And whether it be cow or ew, ye shall not kill it and her young both in one day. 29. And when ye will offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving unto the LORD, offer it at your own will. 30. On the same day it shall be eaten up, ye shall leave none of it until the morrow: I am the LORD. 31. Therefore shall ye keep my commandments, and do them: I am the LORD. 32. Neither shall ye profane my holy name, but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel: I am the LORD which hallow you, 33. That brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God: I am the LORD.

Here are four laws concerning sacrifices.

1. That whatever was offered in sacrifice to God should be without blemish, otherwise it should not be accepted. This had

often been mentioned in the particular institutions of the several sorts of offerings. Now here, 1. They are told what was to be accounted a blemish which rendered a beast unfit for sacrifice; if it were blind or lame, had a wen, or the mange, *ver. 22*. if it were bruised, or crushed, or broken, or cut, *ver. 24*. i. e. as the Jewish writers understand it, if it were any of these ways castrated: if bulls and rams were made into oxen and wethers, they might not be offered. 2. A difference is made between what was brought as a free-will offering, and what was brought as a vow, *ver. 23*. And though none that had any of the forementioned blemishes might be brought for either, yet if a beast had any thing superfluous or lacking, that is, as the Jews understand it, if there was a disproportion or inequality between those parts that are pairs, when one eye, or ear, or leg is bigger than it should be, or less than it should be: if there were no other blemish but this, it might be accepted for a free-will offering, which a man had not before laid himself, nor had the divine law laid him, under any particular obligation to; but for a vow it might not be accepted. Thus God would teach us to make conscience of performing our promises to him very exactly, and not afterwards to abate in quantity or value, of what we had solemnly engaged to devote to him. What was before the vow in our own power, as in the case of a free-will offering, afterwards is not, *Acts v. 4*. 3. It is again and again declared, that no sacrifice should be accepted, if it were thus blemished, *ver. 20, 21*. According to this law, great care was taken to search all the beasts that were brought to be sacrificed, that there might be sure to be no blemish in them. Even from the hand of a stranger, though to such all possible encouragement should be given to do honour to the God of Israel, yet a blemished sacrifice might not be accepted, *ver. 25*. By this it appears, that strangers were expected to the house of God from a far country, *1 Kings viii. 41, 42*. and that they should be welcome, and their offerings accepted, as those of Darius, *Ezra vi. 9, 10*. *Isa. lvi. 6, 7*. The heathen priests were many of them not so strict in this matter, but would receive sacrifices for their Gods that were never so scandalous; but let the strangers know, that the God of Israel would not be so served.

Now, 1. This law was then necessary for the preserving of the honour of the sanctuary, and of the God that was there worshipped. It was fit that every thing that was employed for his honour should be the best of the kind; for as he is the greatest and brightest, so he is the best of beings: and he that is the best must have the best. See how greatly and justly displeasing the breach of this law was to the holy God, *Mal. i. 8, 13, 14*. 2. This law made all the legal sacrifices the fitter to be types of Christ, the great sacrifice, from which all those derived their virtue. In allusion to this law, he is said to be a *Lamb without blemish*, and *without spot*, *1 Pet. i. 19*. As such a priest, so such a sacrifice became us, who was harmless and undefiled. When Pilate declared, *I find no fault in this man*, he did thereby in effect pronounce the sacrifice without blemish. The Jews say, it was the work of the Sagan, or suffragan high priest, to view the sacrifices, and see whether they were without blemish or no: when Christ suffered, Annas was in that office; but little did they think who brought Christ to that same Annas first, who sent him bound to Caiaphas, as a sacrifice fit to be offered, *Joh. xviii. 13, 24*. that they were answering the type of this law. 3. It is an instruction to us to offer to God the best we have in our spiritual sacrifices. If our devotions be ignorant, and cold, and trifling, and full of distractions, we offer the blind, and the lame, and the sick for sacrifice; but cursed be the deceiver that doth so, for while he thinks to put a cheat upon God, he puts a damning cheat upon his own soul.

2. That no beast should be offered in sacrifice before it was eight days old, *ver. 26, 27*. It was provided before, that the firstlings of their cattle, which were to be dedicated to God, should not be brought him till after the eighth day, *Exod. xxii. 30*. Here, that no creature should be offered in sacrifice, till it was eight days old compleat. Sooner than that it was not fit to be used at mens tables, and therefore not at God's altar. The Jews say, it was because the sabbath sanctifies all things, and nothing should be offered to God till at least one sabbath had passed over it. It was in conformity to the law of circumcision, which children were to receive on the eighth day. Christ was sacrificed for us, not in his infancy, though then Herod sought to slay him, but in the prime of his time.

3. That the dam and her young should not both be killed in one day, whether in sacrifice, or for common use, *ver. 28*. There is such a law as this concerning birds, *Deut. xxii. 6*. This was forbidden, not as evil in itself, but because it looked barbarous and cruel to the brute creatures; like the tyranny of the king of Babylon, that slew Zedekiah's sons before his eyes, and then put out his eyes. It looked ill-natured towards the species to kill two generations at once, as if one designed the ruin of the kind.

4. That the flesh of their thank-offerings should be eaten on the same day that they were sacrificed, *ver. 29, 30*. This is a repetition of what we had before, *chap. vii. 15—19*. vi. 7. The chapter concludes with such a general charge as we have often met with, to keep God's commandments, and not to profane his holy name, *ver. 31, 32*. Those that profess God's name, if they do not

not make conscience of keeping his commandments, do but profane his name. The general reasons are added: God's authority over them, *I am the Lord*. His interest in them, *I am your God*. The title he had to them by redemption, *I brought you out of the land of Egypt* on purpose, that I might be your God. The designs of his grace concerning them, *I am the Lord which hallow you*; and the resolutions of his justice, if he had not honour from them, to get him honour upon them, *I will be hallowed among the children of Israel*. God will be a loser in his glory by no man at last; but sooner or later will recover his right, either in the repentance of sinners, or in their ruin.

C H A P. XXIII.

Hitherto the Levitical law hath been chiefly conversant about holy persons, holy things, and holy places; in this chapter we have the institution of holy times; many of which had been mentioned occasionally before, but here they are all put together: only the new moons are not mentioned; all the rest of the feasts of the Lord are. 1. The weekly feast of the sabbath, ver. 3. 2. The yearly feasts. (1.) The passover, and the feast of unleavened bread, ver. 4—8. to which was annexed the offering of the sheaf of first-fruits, ver. 9—14. (2.) Pentecost, ver. 15—22. (3.) The solemnities of the seventh month. The feast of trumpets on the first day, ver. 23—25. The day of atonement on the tenth day, ver. 26—32. And the feast of tabernacles on the fifteenth, ver. 33—44.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts. 3. Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.

Here is, 1. A general account of the holy times which God appointed, ver. 2. and it is only his appointment that can make time holy: for he is the Lord of time; and as soon as ever he had set its wheels a going, it was he that sanctified and blessed one day above the rest, Gen. ii. 3. Man may by his appointment make a good day, Eccl. ix. 19. but it is God's prerogative to make a holy day; nor is any thing sanctified but by the stamp of his institution. As all inherent holiness comes from his special grace, so all adherent holiness from his special appointment. Now concerning the holy times here ordained, observe, (1.) They are called Feasts. The day of atonement, which was one of them, was a fast; yet because most of them were appointed for joy and rejoicing, they are in the general called feasts. Some read it, *These are my assemblies*, but that is co-incident with convocations; I would rather read it, *These are my solemnities*; so the word here used is translated, Isa. xxxiii. 20. where Zion is called the city of our solemnities: and reading it so here, the day of atonement was as great a solemnity as any of them. (2.) They are the feasts of the Lord; my feasts, observed to the honour of his name, and in obedience to his command. (3.) They were proclaimed; for they were not to be observed by the priests only that attended the sanctuary, but by all the people. And this proclamation was the joyful sound, which they were blessed that were within hearing of, Psal. lxxxix. 15. (4.) They were to be sanctified and solemnized with holy convocations. That the services of these feasts might appear the more honourable and august, and the people the more unanimous in the performance of them; it was for the honour of God, and his institutions, which sought not corners, and the purity of which would be best preserved by the publick administration of them; it was also for the edification of the people in love, that the feasts were to be observed as holy convocations.

2. A repetition of the law of the sabbath in the first place. Though the annual feasts were made more remarkable by their general attendance at the sanctuary, yet these must not eclipse the brightness of the sabbath, ver. 3. They are here told, 1. That on that day they must withdraw themselves from all the affairs and business of the world. It is a sabbath of rest, typifying our spiritual rest from sin, and in God, *Ye shall do no work therein*. On other holy days they were forbidden to do any servile work, ver. 7. but on the sabbath and the day of atonement, (which is also called a sabbath) they were to do no work at all, no not the dressing of meat. 2. On that day they must employ themselves in the service of God. (1.) It is a holy convocation, i. e. If it lie within your reach, you shall sanctify it in a religious assembly: let as many as can come to the door of the tabernacle, and let others meet elsewhere for prayer, and praise, and the reading of the law; as in the schools of the prophets, while prophecy continued, and afterwards in the synagogues. Christ appointed the New Testament sabbath to be a holy convocation, by meeting his disciples once and again, (and perhaps oftner) on the first day of the week. (2.) Whether you have opportunity of sanctifying it in a holy convocation or not, yet let it be the sabbath of the Lord

in all your dwellings. Put a difference between that day and other days in your families. It is the sabbath of the Lord, the day on which he rested from the work of creation, and on which he hath appointed us to rest; let it be observed in all your dwellings, even now they dwelt in tents. Note, God's sabbaths are to be religiously observed in every private house, by every family apart, as well as by many families together, in holy convocations. The sabbath of the Lord in our dwellings will be their beauty, strength and safety; it will sanctify, edify and glorify them.

4. ¶ These are the feasts of the LORD, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. 5. In the fourteenth day of the first month at even, is the LORD's passover. 6. And on the fifteenth day of the same month, is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. 7. In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. 8. But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD seven days: in the seventh day is an holy convocation, ye shall do no servile work therein. 9. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 10. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest: 11. And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. 12. And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf, an he-lamb without blemish, of the first year, for a burnt-offering unto the LORD. 13. And the meat-offering thereof shall be two tenth-deals of fine flour mingled with oil; an offering made by fire unto the LORD for a sweet savour: and the drink-offering thereof shall be of wine, the fourth part of an hin. 14. And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the self same day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: It shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations, in all your dwellings.

Here again the feasts are called the feasts of the Lord, because he appointed them. Jeroboam's feast, which he devised of his own heart, 1 Kings xii. 33. was an affront to God, and a sham upon the people. These feasts were to be proclaimed in their seasons, ver. 4. and the seasons God chose for them were in March, May, and September, (according to our present computation) not in winter, because travelling would then be uncomfortable, when the days were short, and the ways foul; not in the middle of summer, because then in those countries they were gathering in their harvest and vintage, and could be ill spared from their country business. Thus graciously doth God consult our comfort in his appointments, obliging us thereby religiously to regard his glory in our observance of them, and not to complain of them as a burden. The solemnities appointed them were, (1.) Many, and returned frequently; which was intended to preserve in them a deep sense of God and religion, and to prevent their inclining to the superstitions of the heathen. God kept them fully employed in his service, that they might not have time to hearken to the temptations of the idolatrous neighbourhood they lived in. (2.) They were most of them times of joy and rejoicing. The weekly sabbath is so, and all their yearly solemnities, except the day of atonement. God would thus teach them, that wisdom's ways are pleasantness, and oblige them to his service, by obliging them to be cheerful in it, and to sing at their work. Seven days were days of strict rest, and holy convocations; the first day and the seventh of the feast of unleavened bread; the day of pentecost; the day of the feast of trumpets; the first day and the eighth of the feast of tabernacles; and the day of atonement: Here were six for holy joy, and one only for holy mourning. We are commanded to rejoice evermore; but not to be evermore weeping.

Here is, 1. A repetition of the law of the passover, which was to be observed on the fourteenth day of the first month, in remembrance of their deliverance out of Egypt, and the distinguishing preservation of their first-born; mercies never to be forgotten. This feast was to begin with the killing of the paschal lamb, ver. 5. It was to continue seven days, during all which time they were to eat sad bread, that was unleavened, ver. 6. and the first and last day of the seven were to be days of holy rest, and holy convocations, ver. 7, 8. They were not idle days spent in sport and recreation, (as many that are called Christians spend their holy days) but offerings were made by fire unto the Lord at his altar; and we have reason to think the people were taught to employ their time in prayer, and praise, and godly meditation.

2. An order for the offering of a sheaf of the first-fruits, upon the second day of the feast of unleavened bread: the first is called the sabbath, because it was observed as a sabbath, ver. 11. and on the morrow after, they had this solemnity. A sheaf or handful

of new corn was brought to the priest, who was to heave it up, in token of his presenting it to the *God of heaven*, and to wave it to and fro before the Lord, as the *Lord of the whole earth*, and this should be accepted for them as a thankful acknowledgment of God's mercy to them in clothing their fields with corn, and of their dependence upon God, and desire towards him, for the preserving of it to their use. For it was the expression both of prayer and praise, *ver. 11.* A lamb for a burnt-offering was to be offered with it, *ver. 12.* As the sacrifice of animals was generally attended with meat-offerings, so this sacrifice of corn was attended with a burnt-offering, that bread and flesh might be set together on God's table. They are forbidden to eat of their new corn, till this handful was offered to God; for it was fit, if God and Israel feast together, that he should be served first. And the offering of this sheaf of first-fruits in the name of the whole congregation, did as it were sanctify to them their whole harvest, and give them a comfortable use of all the rest; for then we may *eat our bread with joy*, when we have in some measure performed our duty to God, and God has accepted our works, for thus all our enjoyments become clean to us. Now, 1. This law was given now, though there was no occasion for putting it in execution till they came to Canaan: in the wilderness they sowed no corn; but God's feeding them there with *bread from heaven*, obliged them hereafter not to grudge him his share of their bread out of the earth. We find when they came into Canaan, the manna ceased upon the very day that the sheaf of first-fruits was offered; they had eaten of the old corn the day before, *Josh. v. 11.* and then on this day they offered the first-fruits, by which they became entitled to the new corn too, *ver. 12.* so that there was no more occasion for manna. 2. This sheaf of first-fruits was typical of our Lord Jesus, who is risen from the dead as the *first-fruits of them that slept*, 1 Cor. xv. 20. That *branch of the Lord* (Isa. iv. 2.) was then presented to him, in the virtue of the sacrifice of himself the Lamb of God, and it was accepted for us. It is very observable, that our Lord Jesus rose from the dead on the very day that the first-fruits were offered, to shew that he was the substance of this shadow. 3. We are taught by this law to *honour the Lord with our substance, and with the first-fruits of all our increase*, Prov. iii. 9. They were not to eat of their new corn, till God's part was offered to him out of it, *ver. 14.* for we must always begin with God; begin our lives with him, begin every day with him, begin every meal with him, begin every affair and business with him; *seek first the kingdom of God.*

15. ¶ And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the days that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven sabbaths shall be compleat: 16. Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath, shall ye number fifty days, and ye shall offer a new meat-offering unto the LORD. 17. Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave-loaves, of two-tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour, they shall be baken with leaven, *they are* the first-fruits unto the LORD. 18. And ye shall offer with the bread seven lambs without blemish, of the first year, and one young bullock, and two rams: they shall be for a burnt-offering unto the LORD, with their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, *even* an offering made by fire of sweet favour unto the LORD. 19. Then ye shall sacrifice one kid of the goats, for a sin-offering, and two lambs of the first year, for a sacrifice of peace-offerings. 20. And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the first-fruits, for a wave-offering before the LORD, with the two lambs: they shall be holy to the LORD for the priest. 21. And ye shall proclaim on the self-same day, *that* it may be an holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work *therein*: *It shall be* a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations. 22. ¶ And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field, when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleanings of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: *I am* the LORD your God.

Here is the institution of the feast of pentecost, or weeks, as it is called, *Deut. xvi. 9.* because it was observed fifty days, or seven weeks, after the passover. It is also called the *feast of harvest*, *Exod. xxiii. 16.* For as the presenting of the sheaf of first-fruits was an introduction to the harvest, and gave them liberty to put in the sickle, so they solemnized the finishing of their corn-harvest at this feast. (1.) Then they offered a handful of ears of barley, now they offered *two loaves of wheaten bread*, *ver. 17.* This was leavened. At the passover they eat unleavened bread, because it was in remembrance of the bread they eat when they came out of Egypt, which was unleavened; but now at pentecost it was leavened, because it was an acknowledgment of God's goodness to them in their ordinary food, which was leavened. (2.)

With that sheaf of first-fruits they only offered one lamb for a burnt-offering, but with these loaves of first-fruits they offered seven lambs, two rams, and one bullock, all for a burnt-offering; so giving glory to God, as the Lord of their land, and the Lord of their harvest, by whose favour they lived, and to whose praise they ought to live. They offered likewise a kid for a sin-offering, so taking shame to themselves, as unworthy of the bread they eat, and imploring pardon for their sins, by which they had forfeited their harvest-mercies, and which they had been guilty of in the receiving of them. And lastly, two lambs for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, to beg a blessing upon the corn they had gathered in, which would be neither sure nor sweet to them without that blessing, *Hag. i. 9.* These were the only peace-offerings that were offered on the behalf of the whole congregation, and they were reckoned *most holy* offerings, whereas other peace-offerings were but *holy*. All these offerings are here appointed, *ver. 18, 19, 20.* (3.) That one day was to be kept with a holy convocation, *ver. 21.* It was one of the days on which all Israel was to meet God, and one another, at the place which the Lord should choose. Some suggest, that whereas seven days were to make up the feast of unleavened bread, there was only one day appointed for the feast of pentecost, because this was a busy time of the year with them, and God allowed them speedily to return to their work in the country. This annual feast was instituted in remembrance of the giving of the law upon mount Sinai, the fiftieth day after they came out of Egypt. That was the feast which, they were told in Egypt, must be observed to God in the wilderness, as a memorial of which ever after they kept this feast. But the period and perfection of this feast, was the pouring out of the Spirit upon the apostles on the day of this feast, *Acts ii. 1.* in which the law of faith was given, fifty days after Christ our passover was sacrificed for us. And on that day (as bishop Patrick well expresseth it) the apostles, having themselves received the *first-fruits of the Spirit*, begat three thousand souls, through the Word of truth, and preserved them, as the first-fruits of the Christian church, to God and the Lamb.

To the institution of the feast of pentecost, is annexed a repetition of that law, which we had before, *chap. xix. 9.* by which they were required to leave the gleanings of their fields, and the corn that grew on the ends of the butts for the poor, *ver. 22.* Probably it comes in here as a thing which the priests must take occasion to mind the people of, when they brought their first-fruits, intimating to them, That to obey even in this small matter, was better than sacrifice; and that unless they were obedient, their offerings should not be accepted. It also taught them, that the joy of harvest should express it self in charity to the poor, who must have their due out of what we have, as well as God his. They that are truly sensible of the mercy they receive from God, will without grudging shew mercy to the poor.

23. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 24. Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation. 25. Ye shall do no servile work *therein*; but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD. 26. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 27. Also on the tenth day of the seventh month, *there shall be* a day of atonement, it shall be an holy convocation unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD. 28. And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the LORD your God. 29. For whatsoever soul *it be* that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people. 30. And whatsoever soul *it be* that doth any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people. 31. Ye shall do no manner of work: *It shall be* a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. 32. *It shall be* unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls in the ninth day of the month at even: from even unto even shall ye celebrate your sabbath.

Here is, 1. The institution of the feast of trumpets, on the first day of the seventh month, *ver. 24, 25.* That which was now the seventh month, had been reckoned the first month, and the year of jubilee was still to begin with this month, *chap. xxv. 8.* so that this was their new-year's-day. It was to be as their other yearly sabbaths, a day of holy rest, *Ye shall do no servile work therein*; and a day of holy work, *Ye shall offer an offering to the Lord*; concerning which particular directions were afterwards given, *Numb. xxix. 1.* That which is here made peculiar to this festival is, that it was a *memorial of blowing of trumpets*: They blew the trumpet every new moon, *Psal. lxxxxi. 3.* but in the new moon of the seventh month it was to be done with more than ordinary solemnity; for they began to blow at sun-rise, and continued till sun-set. Now, (1.) This is here said, to be a memorial

rial, perhaps, of the sound of the trumpet upon Mount Sinai, when the law was given, which must never be forgotten. Some think, it was a memorial of the creation of the world, which is supposed to have been in autumn; for which reason this was till now the first month. The mighty word by which God made the world, is called the *voice of his thunder*, Psal. civ. 7. fitly therefore was it commemorated by blowing of trumpets, or a memorial of shouting, as the Chaldee renders it; for when the *foundations of the earth were fastened, all the sons of God shouted for joy*, Job xxxviii. 6, 7. (2.) The Jewish writers suppose it to have a spiritual signification. Now at the beginning of the year they were called by this sound of trumpet to shake off their spiritual drowiness; to search and try their ways, and to amend them: the day of atonement was the ninth day after this; and thus they were awakened to prepare for that day, by sincere and serious repentance, that it might be indeed to them a day of atonement. And they say, the devout Jews exercised themselves more in good works between the feast of trumpets and the day of expiation, than at any other time of the year. (3.) It was typical of the preaching of the gospel, by which joyful sound souls were called in to serve God, and keep a spiritual feast to him. The conversion of the nations to the faith of Christ, is said to be by the *blowing of a great trumpet*, Isa. xxvii. 13.

2. A repetition of the law of the day of atonement, only so much of it as concerned the people. 1. They must on this day rest from all manner of work; and not only from servile works, as on other annual festivals; it must be as strict a rest as that of the weekly sabbath, ver. 28, 30, 31. The reason is, for it is a day of atonement. Note, The humbling of our souls for sin, and the making of our peace with God, is work that requires the whole man, and the closest application of mind imaginable, and all little enough. He that would do the work of a day of atonement in its day, as it should be done, had need lay aside the thoughts of every thing else. On that day God *spoke peace unto his people, and unto his saints*; and therefore they must lay aside all their worldly business, that they might the more clearly and the more reverently hear that voice of joy and gladness. Fasting days should be days of rest. 2. They must afflict their souls, and this upon pain of being cut off by the hand of God, ver. 27, 29, 32. They must mortify the body, and deny the appetites of it, in token of their sorrow for the sins they had committed, and the mortifying of their indwelling corruptions. Every soul must be afflicted, because every soul was polluted, and guilty before God: while none have fulfilled the law of innocency, none are exempt from the law of repentance. Besides that, every man must sigh and cry for the *abominations of the land*. 3. This day must be observed *from even to even*, ver. 32. *ye shall afflict your souls*, i. e. ye shall begin your fast, and the expressions of your humiliation, in the *ninth day of the month at even*. They were to leave off all their worldly labour, and compose themselves to the work of the day approaching, some time before sun-set on the ninth day, and not to take any food (except children and sick people) till after sun-set on the tenth day. Note, The eves of solemn days ought to be employed in solemn preparation. When work for God and our souls is to be done, we should not straighten our selves in time for the doing of it, for how can we spend our time better? Of this sabbath the rule here is to be understood, *from even unto even shall ye celebrate your sabbath*.

33. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 34. Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the LORD. 35. On the first day shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. 36. Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you, and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: it is a solemn assembly, and ye shall do no servile work therein. 37. These are the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD, a burnt-offering, and a meat-offering, a sacrifice, and drink-offerings, every thing upon his day; 38. Beside the sabbaths of the LORD; and beside your gifts, and beside all your vows, and beside all your free-will offerings, which ye give unto the LORD. 39. Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: on the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath. 40. And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm-trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook: and ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days. 41. And ye shall keep it a feast unto the LORD seven days in the year: *It shall be a statute for ever in your generations, ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month.* 42.

Ye shall dwell in booths seven days, all that are Israelites born, shall dwell in booths: 43. That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: *I am the LORD your God.* 44. And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts of the LORD.

We have here the institution of the feast of tabernacles, which was one of the three great feasts, at which all the males were bound to attend, and celebrated with more expressions of joy than any of them.

1. It was to be observed *on the fifteenth day of the seventh month*, ver. 34. but five days after the day of atonement. We may suppose, though they were not all bound to attend on the day of atonement, as on the three great festivals, yet that many of the devout Jews came up so many days before the feast of tabernacles, as to enjoy the opportunity of attending on the day of atonement. Now, (1.) The afflicting of their souls on the day of atonement, prepared them for the joy of the feast of tabernacles. The more we are grieved and humbled for sin, the better qualified we are for the comforts of the holy Ghost. (2.) The joy of this feast recompensed them for the sorrow of that fast; for they that *sow in tears, shall reap in joy*.

2. It was to continue eight days, the first and last of which were to be observed as sabbaths, days of holy rest, and holy convocations, ver. 35, 36, 39. The sacrifices to be offered on these eight days we have a very large appointment of, *Numb. xxix. 12, &c.*

3. During the first seven days of this feast, all the people were to leave their houses, and the women and children in them, and to dwell in booths made of the boughs of thick trees, particularly palm-trees, ver. 40, 42. The Jews make the taking of the branches to be a distinct ceremony from the making of the booths. It is said indeed, *Neh. viii. 15.* that they *made their booths of the branches of trees*, which they might do, and yet use that farther expression of joy, the carrying of palm-branches in their hands, which appears to have been a token of triumph upon other occasions, *John xii. 13.* and is alluded to, *Rev. vii. 9.* The eighth day some make a distinct feast of it self, but it is called, *John vii. 37.* *that great day of this feast*; it was the day on which they returned from their booths, to settle again in their own houses.

4. They were to *rejoice before the Lord God* during all the time of this feast, ver. 40. The tradition of the Jews is, that they were to express their joy by dancing and singing hymns of praise to God, with musical instruments; and not the common people only, but the wise men of Israel, and their elders, were to do it in the court of the sanctuary: for, (say they) The joy with which a man rejoiceth in doing a commandment, is really a great service.

Now, 1. This feast was to be kept in remembrance of their dwelling in tents in the wilderness. Thus it is expounded here, ver. 43. *That your generations may know*, not only by the written history, but by this ocular tradition, *that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths*. Thus it kept in perpetual remembrance, (1.) The meanness of their beginning, and the low and desolate state out of which God advanced that people. Note, Those that are comfortably fixed ought often to call to mind their former unsettled state, when they were but little in their own eyes. (2.) The mercy of God to them, that when they dwelt in tabernacles God not only set up a tabernacle for himself among them, but with the utmost care and tenderness imaginable hung a canopy over them, even the cloud that sheltered them from the heat of the sun. God's former mercies to us and our fathers, ought to be kept in everlasting remembrance. The eighth day was the great day of this feast, because then they were returned to their own houses again; and remembered how, after they had long dwelt in tents in the wilderness, at length they came to a happy settlement in the land of promise, where they dwelt in goodly houses. And they would the more sensibly value and be thankful for the comforts and conveniences of their houses, when they had been seven days dwelling in booths. It is good for those that have ease and plenty, sometimes to learn what it is to endure hardness.

2. It was a feast of in-gathering, so it is called, *Exod. xxiii. 16.* When they had gathered in the *fruit of their land*, (ver. 39.) the vintage as well as the harvest, then they were to keep this feast in thankfulness to God for all the increase of the year; and some think, that the eighth day of the feast had special reference to this ground of the institution. Note, The joy of harvest ought to be improved for the furtherance of our joy in God. *The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof*, and therefore whatever we have the comfort of, he must have the glory of, especially when any mercy is perfected.

3. It was a typical feast. It is supposed by many that our blessed Saviour was born much about the time of this feast; then he left his mansions of light above to *tabernacle among us*, *John i. 14.* and he dwelt in booths. And the worship of God under the New Testament, is prophesied of, under the notion of keeping the *feast of tabernacles*, *Zech. xiv. 16.* For, 1. The gospel of Christ teacheth us to *dwell in tabernacles*, to sit loose to this world, as those that have *here no continuing city*, but by faith, and hope, and a holy contempt of present things, to *go out to Christ without the*

the camp, Heb. xiii. 13, 14. 2. It teacheth us to *rejoice before the Lord our God*. Those are the circumcision, Israelites indeed, that always *rejoice in Christ Jesus*, Phil. iii. 3. And the more we are taken off from this world, the less liable we are to the interruption of our joys.

Lastly, Here is the summary and conclusion of these institutions. 1. God appointed these feasts, *ver. 37, 38. Beside the sabbaths, and your free-will offerings*. This teacheth us, (1.) That calls to extraordinary services will not excuse us from our constant stated performances. Within the days of the feast of tabernacles there must fall at least one sabbath, which must be as strictly observed as any other. (2.) That God's institutions leave room for free-will offerings. Not that we may invent what he never instituted, but we may repeat what he has instituted, ordinarily the oftner the better. God is well pleased with a willing people.

2. Moses declared them to the children of Israel, *ver. 44*. He let them know what God appointed, and neither more nor less. Thus St. Paul delivered to the churches what he had *received from the Lord*. We have reason to be thankful, that the feasts of the Lord declared unto us, are not so numerous, nor the observance of them so burthensome and costly as theirs then was, but more spiritual and significant, and surer sweeter earnest of the everlasting feast, at the last in-gathering, which we hope to be celebrating to eternity.

C H A P. XXIV.

In this chapter we have, 1. A repetition of the laws concerning the lamps and the shew-bread, *ver. 1—9*. 2. A violation of the law against blasphemy, with the imprisonment, trial, condemnation, and execution of the blasphemer, *ver. 10—14*. with *ver. 23*. 3. The law against blasphemy re-enforced, *ver. 15, 16*. with sundry other laws, *ver. 17—22*.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oil-olive, beaten, for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually. 3. Without the vail of the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, shall Aaron order it from the evening, unto the morning, before the LORD continually: *It shall be a statute for ever in your generations*. 4. He shall order the lamps upon the pure candlestick before the LORD continually. 5. ¶ And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth deals shall be in one cake. 6. And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row; upon the pure table, before the LORD. 7. And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon *each* row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, *even an offering made by fire unto the LORD*. 8. Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, *being taken* from the children of Israel, by an everlasting covenant. 9. And it shall be Aarons and his sons, and they shall eat it in the holy place: for it is most holy unto him, of the offerings of the LORD made by fire, by a perpetual statute.

Care is here taken, and orders given, for the decent furnishing of the candlestick and table in God's house.

1. The lamps must always be kept burning. The law for this we had before, *Exod. xxvii. 20, 21*. it is here repeated, probably, because now it began to be put in execution, when other things were settled. (1.) The people were to provide oil, *ver. 2*. and this, as every thing else that was to be used in God's service, must be of the best, *pure oil-olive beaten*, probably it was double-strained. This was to *cause the lamps to burn*; all our English copies read it *lamps*, but in the original it is singular, *ver. 2*. to *cause the lamp to burn*; but plural, *ver. 4*. *He shall order the lamps*. The seven lamps made all one lamp; in allusion to which the blessed Spirit of grace is represented by *seven lamps of fire before the throne*, *Rev. iv. 5*. for there are *diversities of gifts, but one Spirit*, *1 Cor. xii. 4*. Ministers are as burning and shining lights in Christ's church, but it is the duty of people to provide comfortably for them, as Israel for the lamps. Scandalous maintenance makes a scandalous ministry. (2.) The priests were to tend the lamps; they must snuff them, clean the candlestick, supply them with oil, morning and evening, *ver. 3, 4*. Thus it is the work of the ministers of the gospel to *hold forth that word of life*, not to set up new lights, but by expounding and preaching the word, to make the light of it more clear and extensive. This was the ordinary way of keeping the lamps burning; but when the church was poor, and in distress, we find its lamps fed constantly with oil from the good olives immediately, without the ministry of priests or people, *Zech. iv. 2, 3*. for though God has tied us to means, he has not tied himself to them, but will take effectual care that his lamp never go out in the world for want of oil.

2. The table must always be kept spread. This was appointed before, *Exod. xxv. 30*. And here also, 1. The table was fur-

nished with bread; not dainties or varieties to gratify a luxurious palate, but twelve loaves, or cakes of bread, *ver. 5, 6*. Where there is plenty of bread, there is no famine; and where bread is not, there is no feast. There was a loaf for every tribe, for *in our Father's house there is bread enough*. They were all provided for by the divine bounty, and were all welcome to the divine grace. Even after the revolt of the ten tribes, this number of loaves was continued, *2 Chron. xiii. 11*. for the sake of those few of each tribe that retained their affection to the temple, and continued their attendance on it. 2. A handful of frankincense was put in a golden saucer upon or by each row, *ver. 7*. When the bread was removed, and given to the priests, this frankincense was burnt upon the golden altar (I suppose) over and above the daily incense; and this was for a memorial instead of the bread, an *offering made by fire*. As the handful of the meat-offering, which was burnt upon the altar, is called the *memorial thereof*, *Lev. ii. 2*. Thus a little was accepted as an humble acknowledgment, and all the loaves were consigned to the priests. All God's spiritual Israel, typified by the twelve loaves, are made through Christ a sweet favour to him, and their prayers are said to come up before God for a memorial, *Acts x. 4*. The word is borrowed from the ceremonial law. 3. Every sabbath it was renewed. When the loaves had stood there a week, the priests had them, to eat with other holy things that were to be eaten in the holy place, *ver. 9*. and new ones were provided at the publick charge, and put in the room of them, *ver. 8*. The Jews say, the hands of those priests that put on were mixed with theirs that took off, that the table might be never empty, but the bread might be *before the Lord continually*. God is never unprovided for the entertainment of those that visit him, as men oft are, *Luke xi. 5*. Every one of these cakes contained two tenth-deals, *i. e.* two omers of fine flour; just so much manna every Israelite gathered on the sixth day for the sabbath, *Exod. xvi. 22*. Whence some infer, that this shew-bread, which was set on the table on the sabbath, was intended as a memorial of the manna wherewith they were fed in the wilderness. Christ's ministers should provide new bread for his house every sabbath day, the products of their fresh studies in the scripture, that *their proficiency may appear to all*, *1 Tim. iv. 5*.

10. ¶ And the son of an Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel, and this son of the Israelitish woman, and a man of Israel strove together in the camp. 11. And the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name of the LORD, and cursed: and they brought him unto Moses (and his mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan) 12. And they put him in ward, that the mind of the LORD might be shewed them. 13. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 14. Bring forth him that hath cursed, without the camp, and let all that heard him, lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him. 15. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Whosoever curseth his God, shall bear his sin. 16. And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the LORD, shall be put to death. 17. ¶ And he that killeth any man, shall surely be put to death. 18. And he that killeth a beast, shall make it good; beast for beast. 19. And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbour, as he hath done, so shall it be done unto him. 20. Breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth: as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him again. 21. And he that killeth a beast, he shall restore it: and he that killeth a man, he shall be put to death. 22. Ye shall have one manner of law, as well for the stranger, as for one of your own country: for I am the LORD your God. 23. ¶ And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, that they should bring forth him that had cursed, out of the camp, and stone him with stones: and the children of Israel did as the LORD commanded Moses.

Evil manners, we say, beget good laws. We have here an account of the evil manners of a certain nameless mungrel Israelite, and the good laws occasioned thereby.

1. The offender was the son of an Egyptian father, and an Israelitish mother, *ver. 10*. His mother was of the tribe of Dan, *ver. 11*. neither he nor his father are named, but his mother only, who was an Israelite. This notice is taken of his parentage, either, 1. To intimate what occasioned the quarrel he was engaged in: The Jews say, he offered to set up his tent among the Danites in the right of his mother, but was justly opposed by some of other of that tribe; and told, that his father being an Egyptian,

he had no part nor lot in the matter, but must look upon himself as a stranger. Or, 2. To shew the common ill effect of such mixt marriages. When a daughter of Israel would marry an idolatrous malignant Egyptian, what could be the product of such a marriage but a blasphemer? For the children will be apt to take after the worse side, whichever it is; and will sooner learn of an Egyptian father to blaspheme, than of an Israelitish mother to pray and praise.

2. The occasion of the offence was contention; he *strove with a man of Israel*. The mixt multitude of Egyptians that came up with Israel, (*Exod. xii. 38.*) were many ways hurtful to them, and this was one; they were often the authors of strife. The way to preserve the peace of the church is to preserve the purity of it. In this strife he broke out into ill language. Note, When quarrels begin we know not what mischief they will make before they end, nor how great a matter a little fire may kindle. When mens passion is up, they are apt to forget both their reason and their religion; which is a good reason why we should not be apt either to give or to resent provocation, but leave off strife before it be meddled with, because the beginning of it is *as the letting forth of water*.

3. The offence it self was blasphemy and cursing, *ver. 11.* It is supposed his cause came to be heard before the judges, who determined that he had no right to the privileges of an Israelite, his father being an Egyptian, and being enraged at the sentence, 1. He *blasphemed the name of the Lord*. He *blasphemed the name*, i. e. God; who is known by his name only, not by his nature, or any similitude. Not as if God were a mere name, but his is a name above every name. The translators add [*of the Lord*] which is implied, but not expressed in the original, for the greater reverence of the divine majesty: it is a shame it should be found on record that the very name of Jehovah should be blasphemed; *tell it not in Gath*. It is a fond conceit of the superstitious Jews, that his blasphemy was pronouncing the name Jehovah, which they call ineffable: he that made himself known by that name, never forbade the calling of him by that name. It is likely finding himself aggrieved by the divine appointment, which separated between the Israelites and strangers, he impudently reproached both that law and its law-maker, and set him at defiance. 2. He cursed, either God himself, and then his cursing was the same with blaspheming; or, the person with whom he strove; imprecations of mischief are the hellish language of hasty passion, as well as of rooted malice; or, the judges that gave sentence against him; he flew in the face of the court, and ridiculed the processes of it: thus he added sin to sin.

4. The caution with which he was proceeded against for this sin. The witnesses or inferior judges brought him and his case (which was somewhat extraordinary) unto Moses, *ver. 11.* according to the order settled, *Exod. xviii. 22.* and Moses himself would not give judgment hastily, but committed the offender into custody, till he had consulted the oracle in this case. Note, Judges must deliberate; both those that give the verdict, and those that give the sentence, must consider diligently what they do, and do nothing rashly, for *the judgment is God's*, *Deut. i. 17.* and before him there will be a re-hearing of the cause. They waited to know what was *the mind of the Lord*, whether he was to be put to death by the hand of the magistrate, or to be left to the judgment of God; or rather, they wanted to know whether he should be stoned, as those were to be that only cursed their parents, *Lev. xx. 9.* or whether the crime being so much greater, some sorer punishment should not be inflicted on him. Note, Those that sit in judgment should sincerely desire, and by prayer and the use of all good means, should endeavour to *know the mind of the Lord*, because they *judge for him*, *2 Chron. xix. 6.* and to him they are accountable.

5. Sentence past upon this offender by the righteous Judge of heaven and earth himself, *ver. 14.* *Let all the congregation stone him*. God could have cut him off by an immediate stroke from heaven, but he would put this honour upon the institution of magistracy, to make use of it for the supporting and vindicating of his own glory in the world. Observe, (1.) The place of execution appointed, *Bring him forth without the camp*; to signify their detestation of the crime, they must thus cast out the criminal as an abominable branch, and separate him from them as an unclean thing, and unworthy a place in the camp of Israel. (2.) The executioners; *Let all the congregation do it*, to shew their zeal for the honour of God's name. Every man should have a stone to throw at him that blasphemes God, reckoning himself nearly concerned in the reproaches cast on God, *Psal. lxxix. 9.* Thus also the greater terror would be cast upon the congregation; they that once helped to stone a blasphemer, would ever after dread every thing that bordered upon blasphemy, that looked like it, or looked towards it. (3.) The solemnity of the execution, before the congregation stoned him, the witnesses were to *lay their hands upon his head*. The Jews say, this was used in the execution of no criminals but blasphemers only; and that it was done with words to this purpose, *Thy blood be upon thy own head, for thou thy self hast occasioned it*. Let no blame be laid on the law, judges, juries, or witnesses; *If thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it*.

6. A standing law made upon this occasion for the stoning of

No. 9.

blasphemers, *ver. 15, 16.* Magistrates are the guardians of both tables, and ought to be as jealous for the honour of God, against those that speak contemptuously of his being and government, as for the publick peace and safety against the disturbers of that. (1.) A great stress is laid upon this law, as in no case to be dispensed with. He shall surely be put to death; they shall certainly stone him. They that lightly esteem God's honour, might think it hard to make a man an offender for a word; words are but wind; but God would let them know that such words as these were not to be made light of, which come from malice against God in the heart of him that speaks, and must occasion either great guilt, or great grief, to those that hear. (2.) It is made to extend to the strangers that sojourned among them, as well as those that were born in the land. God never made any law to compel strangers to be circumcised, and embrace the Jewish religion, profelytes made by force would be no honour to the God of Israel; but he made a law to restrain strangers from speaking evil of the God of Israel. (3.) He that was put to death for blasphemy, is said to *bear his sin*, in the punishment of it; no sacrifice being appointed on the head of which the sin might be transferred, he himself was to bear it upon his own head, as a sacrifice to divine justice. So *his own tongue fell upon him*, *Psal. lxxiv. 8.* and the tongue of a blasphemer will fall heavy.

7. A repetition of some other laws annexed to this new law. (1.) That murder should be punished with death, *ver. 17.* and again, *ver. 21.* according to an ancient law in Noah's time, *Gen. ix. 6.* and the very law of nature, *Gen. iv. 10.* (2.) That maims should in like manner be punished by the law of retaliation, *ver. 19, 20.* Not that men might in these cases be their own avengers, but they may appeal to the civil magistrate, who shall award suffering to the injurious, and satisfaction to the injured, as shall be thought fit in proportion to the hurt done. This law we had before, *Exod. xxii. 4, 5.* And it was more agreeable to that dispensation in which was revealed the rigor of the law, and what sin deserved, than to the dispensation we are under, in which is revealed the grace of the gospel, and the remission of sins; and therefore our Saviour has set aside this law, *Matth. v. 38.* not to restrain magistrates from executing publick justice, but to restrain us all from returning personal injuries, and to oblige us to forgive as we are and hope to be forgiven. (3.) That hurt done wilfully to a neighbour's cattle should be punished, by making good the damage, *ver. 18, 21.* Thus the divine law took not only their lives, but their goods also, under its protection. Those beasts which belonged to no particular person, but were, as our law speaks, *feræ naturæ*, it was lawful for them to kill; but not those which any man had a property in. Doth God take care for oxen? Yes; for our sakes he doth. (4.) That strangers as well as native Israelites should be both entitled to the benefit of this law, so as not to suffer wrong, and should be liable to the penalty of this law, in case they did wrong. And it should seem, this is it that brings in these laws here, to shew how equitable it was that strangers as well as Israelites should be punished for blasphemy, because strangers as well as Israelites were punishable for other crimes. And there may be this further reason for the recognition of these laws here; God would hereby shew what provision he had made for man's safety in punishing those that were injurious to him; which should be an argument with magistrates to be jealous for his honour, and to punish those that blasphemed his name. If God took care for their comfort, they ought to take care for his glory.

8. The execution of the blasphemer; Moses did as it were sign the warrant for it, he *spoke unto the children of Israel* to do it, and they *did as the Lord commanded Moses*, *ver. 23.* This teacheth that death is the wages of sin; and that blasphemy in particular is an *iniquity to be punished by the judges*. But if those who thus profane the name of God escape punishment from men, yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgments. This blasphemer was the first that died by the law of Moses. Stephen, the first that died for the gospel, died by the abuse of this law; the martyr and the malefactor suffered the same death; but how vast the difference between them!

CHAP. XXV.

The law of this chapter concerns the lands and estates of the Israelites in Canaan, the occupying and transferring of which were to be under the divine direction as well as the management of religious worship; for as the tabernacle was a holy house, so Canaan was a holy land; and upon that account, as much as any thing, it was the glory of all lands. In token of a peculiar title God had to this land, and a right to dispose of it, he appointed, 1. That every seventh year should be a year of rest from occupying the land, a sabbatical year, *ver. 1—7.* In this God expected from them extraordinary instances of faith and obedience, and they might expect from God extraordinary instances of power and goodness in providing for them, *ver. 18—22.* 2. That every fiftieth year should be a year of jubilee, that is, (1.) A year of release of debts and mortgages, and return to the possession of their alienated lands, *ver. 8—17.* Particular directions are given, 1. Concerning the sale and redemption of lands, *ver. 23—28.* 2. Of houses in cities and villages, with a proviso for Levites cities,

cities, ver. 29—34. (2.) A year of release of servants and bond-slaves. (1.) Here is inserted a law for the kind usage of poor debtors, ver. 35—38. (2.) Then comes the law for the discharge of all Israelites that were sold for servants in the year of jubilee, if they were not redeemed before. (1.) If they were sold to Israelites, ver. 39—46. And, (2.) If sold to proselytes, ver. 47—55. All these appointments have something moral and of perpetual obligation in them, though in the letter of them they were not only peculiar to the Jewish nation, but to them only while they were in Canaan.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses in Mount Sinai, saying, 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the LORD. 3. Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof. 4. But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. 5. That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest, thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land. 6. And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you; for thee, and for thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee. 7. And for thy cattel, and for the beast that are in thy land, shall all the increase thereof be meat.

The law of Moses laid a great deal of stress upon the sabbath, the sanctification of which was the earliest and most ancient of all divine institutions, designed for the keeping up of the knowledge and worship of the Creator among men; and not only revived the observance of sabbath days every week, but for the further advancement of the honour of them added the institution of a sabbatical year, ver. 4. *In the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land.* And hence the Jews collect that vulgar tradition, that after the world hath stood six thousand years (a thousand years being to God as one day) it shall cease, and the eternal sabbath shall succeed. A weak foundation on which to build the fixing of that day and hour which it is God's prerogative to know. The sabbatical year began in September at the end of harvest, the seventh month of their ecclesiastical year: and the law was, 1. That at the seed-time, which immediately followed the end of their in-gathering, they should sow no corn in their land, and that they should not in the spring dress their vineyard, and consequently expect neither harvest nor vintage the next year. 2. That what their ground did produce of it self they should not claim any property in, nor use, otherwise than from hand to mouth, but leave it for the poor, servants, strangers, and cattle, ver. 5, 6, 7. It must be a sabbath of rest to the land; they must neither do any work about it, nor expect any fruit from it; all annual labours must be intermitted in the seventh year, as much as daily labours on the seventh day. The Jews say, they began not to reckon for the sabbatical year till they had compleated the conquest of Canaan, which was in the eighth year of Joshua; the seventh year after that was the first sabbatical year, and so the fiftieth year was the jubilee. This year there was to be a general release of debts, *Deut. xv. 1, 2.* And a publick reading of the law in the feast, *Deut. xxxi. 10, 11.* to make it the more solemn.

Now, 1. God would hereby shew them that he was their landlord, and they were tenants at will under him. Landlords use to condition with their tenants, when they shall break up their ground, how long they shall till it, and when they shall let it rest: God would thus give, grant, and convey, that good land to them under such proviso's and limitations, as should let them know they were not proprietors, but dependents on their Lord. 2. It was a kindness to their land to let it rest sometimes, and would keep it in heart (as our husbandmen express it) for posterity, whose satisfaction God would have them to consult, and not to use the ground as if it were designed for one age only. 3. When they were thus for a whole year taken off from all country business, they would have the more leisure to attend the exercises of religion, and to get the knowledge of God and his law. 4. They were hereby taught to be charitable and generous, and not to engross all to themselves, but to be willing that others should share with them in the gifts of God's bounty, which the earth brought forth of it self. 5. They were brought to live in a constant dependence upon the divine providence, finding that as man lives not by bread alone, so he has bread not by his own industry alone, but, if God pleases, by the word of blessing from the mouth of God, without any care or pains of man, *Matth. iv. 4.* 6. They were minded of the easy life man lived in paradise, when he eat of every good thing, not, as since, in the sweat of his face. Labour and toil came in with sin. 7. They were taught to consider how the poor lived, that did neither sow nor reap, even by the blessing of God upon a little. Lastly, This year of rest typified the spiritual rest which all believers enter into through Christ, our true Noah, who giveth

us comfort and rest concerning our work, and the toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed, *Gen. v. 29.* Through him we are eased of the burthen of worldly care and labour, both being sanctified and sweetened to us, and we are enabled and encouraged to live by faith. And as the fruits of this sabbath of the land were enjoyed in common, so the salvation wrought out by Christ is a common salvation; and this sabbatical year seemed to have been revived in the christian church, when the believers had all things common, *Acts ii. 44.*

8. ¶ And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years, and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. 9. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound, on the tenth day of the seventh month; in the day of atonement, shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. 10. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you, and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. 11. A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of it self in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed. 12. For it is the jubilee, it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field. 13. In the year of this jubilee, ye shall return every man unto his possession. 14. And if thou sell ought unto thy neighbour, or buyest ought of thy neighbours hand, ye shall not oppress one another. 15. According to the number of years after the jubilee thou shalt buy of thy neighbour, and according unto the number of years of the fruits he shall sell unto thee: 16. According to the multitude of years thou shalt increase the price thereof, and according to the fewness of years thou shalt diminish the price of it: for according to the number of the years of the fruits doth he sell unto thee. 17. Ye shall not therefore oppress one another; but thou shalt fear thy God: For I am the LORD your God. 18. ¶ Wherefore ye shall do my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; and ye shall dwell in the land in safety. 19. And the land shall yield her fruit, and ye shall eat your fill, and dwell therein in safety. 20. And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase: 21. Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years. 22. And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of old fruit, until the ninth year; until her fruits come in, ye shall eat of the old store.

Here is, 1. The general institution of the jubilee, ver. 8, &c.

1. When it was to be observed after seven sabbaths of years, ver. 8. Whether the forty-ninth or the fiftieth is a great question among learned men: that it should be the seventh sabbatical year, that is, the forty-ninth (which by a very common form of speech is called the fiftieth) seems to me most probable, and is, I think, made pretty clear by that learned chronologer Calvisius, and the objections removed; but this is not a place for the arguing of it. Seven sabbaths of weeks were reckoned from the passover to the feast of pentecost, (or fiftieth day, for so pentecost signifies) and so seven sabbaths of years from one jubilee to another, and the seventh seventh is called the fiftieth: and all this honour is put upon the sevenths, for the sake of God's resting the seventh day from the work of creation.

2. How it was to be proclaimed, with sound of trumpet in all parts of the country, ver. 5. both to give notice to all persons of it, and to express their joy and triumph in it; and the word jubel or jubilee is supposed to signify some particular sound of the trumpet distinguishable from any other, for the trumpet that gives an uncertain sound is of little service, *1 Cor. xiv. 8.* The trumpet was sounded in the close of the day of atonement, thence the jubilee commenced: and very fitly, when they had been humbling and afflicting their souls for sin, then they were made to hear this voice of joy and gladness, *Psal. li. 8.* When their peace was made with God, then liberty was proclaimed; for the removal of guilt is necessary to make way for the entrance of all true comfort, *Rom. v. 1, 2.* In allusion to this solemn proclamation of the jubilee, it was foretold concerning our Lord Jesus, that he should preach the acceptable year of the Lord, *Isa. lxi. 2.* He sent his apostles to proclaim it with the trumpet of the everlasting gospel, which they were to preach to every creature. And it stands still foretold, that at the last day the trumpet shall sound, which shall release the dead out of the bondage of the grave, and restore us to our possessions.

3. What was to be done in that year extraordinary: besides the common rest of the land, which was observed every sabbatical year,

year, *ver. 11, 12.* and the release of personal debts, *Deut. xv. 2, 3.* there was to be the legal restoration of every Israelite to all the property and all the liberty which had been aliened from him since the last jubilee; so that never was any people so secured in their liberty and property (those glories of a people) as Israel was. Effectual care was taken that while they kept close to God, these should not only not be taken from them by the violence of others, but not thrown away by their own folly.

1. The property which every man had in his dividend of the land of Canaan, could not be alienated any longer than till the year of jubilee, and then he or his should return to it, and have a title to it as undisputed, and the possession of it as undisturbed as ever, *ver. 10, 13. Ye shall return every man to his possession;* so that if a man had sold or mortgaged his estate, or any part of it, it should then return to him or his heirs free of all charge and incumbrance. Now this was no wrong to the purchaser, because the year of jubilee was fixed, and every man knew when it would come, and made his bargain accordingly. By our law indeed, if lands be granted to a man and his heirs upon condition that he shall never sell or alien them, the grant is good, but the condition is void and repugnant; *Iniquum est ingenuis hominibus* (say the lawyers) *non esse liberam rerum suarum alienationem.* Yet it is agreed in the books, that if the king grant lands to a man in fee upon condition he shall not alien, the condition is good. Now God would shew his people Israel that their land was his, and they were his tenants, and therefore he ties them out that they shall not have power to sell, but only to make leases for any term of years not going beyond the next jubilee. By this means it was provided, (1.) That their genealogies should be carefully preserved, which would be of use for clearing our Saviour's pedigree. (2.) That the distinction of tribes should be kept up; for though a man might purchase lands in another tribe, yet he could not retain them longer than till the year of jubilee, and then they would revert of course. (3.) That none should grow exorbitantly rich, by laying *house to house, and field to field*, *Isa. v. 8.* but should rather apply themselves to the cultivating of what they had, than the enlarging of their possessions. The wisdom of the Roman commonwealth sometimes provided that no man should be master of above five hundred acres. (4.) That no family should be sunk and ruined, and condemned to perpetual poverty. This particular care God took for the support of the honour of that people, and the preserving of that good land, not only to the nation in general, but every man's share to his family in particular, for a perpetual inheritance; that it might the better typify that good part which shall *never be taken away* from those that have it.

2. The liberty which every man was born to, if it were sold or forfeited, should likewise return at the year of jubilee, *ver. 10. Ye shall return every man to his family.* Those that were sold into other families, thereby became strangers to their own; but in this year of redemption they were to return. This was typical of our redemption by Christ from the slavery of sin and Satan, and our restoration to the glorious liberty of the children of God. Some compute that the very year in which Christ died was a year of jubilee, and the last that ever was kept. But however that be, we are sure it is the Son that *makes us free*, and then we are free indeed.

2. A law upon this occasion against oppression in buying and selling of land; neither the buyer nor the seller must over-reach, *ver. 14, 15, 16, 17.* in short, the buyer must not give less, nor the seller take more than the just value of the thing, considered as necessarily returning at the year of jubilee. It must be settled what the clear yearly value of the land was, and then how many years purchase it was worth till the year of jubilee. But they must reckon only *the years of the fruits*, *ver. 15.* and therefore must discount for the sabbatical years. It is easy to observe, that the nearer the jubilee was, the less must the value of the land be, according to the *fewness of the years thou shalt diminish the price.* But we do not find it so easy practically to infer from thence, that the nearer the world comes to its period, the less value we should put upon the things of it: because *the time is short, and the fashion of the world passeth away*; let those that buy be as though they possessed not. One would put little value on an old house, that is ready to drop down.

All bargains ought to be made by this rule, *Ye shall not oppress one another*, not take advantage of one another's ignorance or necessity, but thou shalt fear thy God. Note, The fear of God reigning in the heart, would effectually restrain us from doing any wrong to our neighbour in word or deed; for though men be not, God is the avenger of those that go beyond or defraud their brethren, *1 Thess. iv. 5.* Perhaps Nehemiah refers to this very law, *chap. v. 15.* where he tells us, that he did not oppress those he had under his power, *because of the fear of God.*

3. Assurance given them that they should be no losers, but great gainers by observing these years of rest. It is promised, 1. That they should be safe, *ver. 18. Ye shall dwell in the land in safety.* And again, *ver. 19.* the word signifies both outward safety, and inward security and confidence of spirit, that they should be quiet both from evil, and from the fear of evil. 2. That they should be rich; *Ye shall eat your fill.* Note, If we be careful to do our duty, we may cheerfully trust God with

our comfort. 3. That they should not want food convenient that year, in which they did neither sow nor reap, *ver. 21. I will command my blessing in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years.* This was, (1.) A standing miracle, that whereas at other times one year did but serve to bring in another, the products of the sixth year should serve to bring in the ninth. Note, The blessing of God upon our provision will make a little go a great way, and satisfy even the poor with bread, *Psal. cxxxii. 15.* It was, 2. A lasting memorial of the manna, which was given double on the sixth day for two days. And, (3.) It was intended for an encouragement to all God's people in all ages, to trust him in the way of duty, and to cast their care upon him. There is nothing lost by faith and self-denial in our obedience.

23. ¶ The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine, for ye are strangers and sojourners with me. 24. And in all the land of your possession, ye shall grant a redemption for the land. 25. ¶ If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold. 26. And if the man have none to redeem it, and himself be able to redeem it: 27. Then let him count the years of the sale thereof, and restore the overplus unto the man to whom he sold it; that he may return unto his possession. 28. But if he be not able to restore it to him, then that which is sold, shall remain in the hand of him that hath bought it, until the year of jubilee: and in the jubilee it shall go out, and shall return unto his possession. 29. And if a man sell a dwelling house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold: within a full year may he redeem it. 30. And if it be not redeemed within the space of a full year: then the house that is in the walled city, shall be established for ever to him that bought it, throughout his generations: it shall not go out in the jubilee. 31. But the houses of the villages which have no walls round about them, shall be counted as the fields of the country: they may be redeemed, and they shall go out in the jubilee. 32. Notwithstanding the cities of the Levites, and the houses of the cities of their possession, may the Levites redeem at any time. 33. And if a man purchase of the Levites, then the house that was sold, and the city of his possession shall go out in the year of jubilee: for the houses of the cities of the Levites are their possession among the children of Israel. 34. But the field of their suburbs of their cities may not be sold, for it is their perpetual possession. 35. ¶ And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him: yea though he be a stranger, or a sojourner; that he may live with thee. 36. Take thou no usury of him, or increase: but fear thy God, that thy brother may live with thee. 37. Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase. 38. I am the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, and to be your God.

Here is, 1. A law concerning the real estates of the Israelites in the land of Canaan, and the transferring of them.

1. That no land should be sold for ever, from the family to whose lot it fell in the division of the land. And the reason given is, *The land is mine, and ye are strangers and sojourners with me*, *ver. 23.* (1.) God having a particular propriety in this land, he would by this restraint keep them sensible of it. The possessions of good people, who having given up themselves to God have therewith given up all they have to him, are in a particular manner at his dispose, and his disposal of them must be submitted to. (2.) They being *strangers and sojourners with him* in that land, and having his tabernacle among them, to alien their part of that land would be in effect to cut themselves off from their fellowship and communion with God, which that was a token and symbol of. For which reason Naboth would rather incur the wrath of a king, than part with the inheritance of his fathers, *1 Kings xxi. 3.*

2. That if a man were constrained through poverty to sell his land, for the subsistence of his family, yet if afterwards he were able he might redeem it, before the year of jubilee, *ver. 24, 26, 27.* and the price must be settled according to the number of years since the sale, and before the jubilee.

3. That if the person himself were not able to redeem it, his next kinsman might, *ver. 25. The redeemer thereof, he that is near unto him shall come and shall redeem*, so it might be read. The kinsman is called *Goel*, the redeemer, *Numb. v. 8. Ruth iii. 9.* to whom belonged the right of redeeming the land: And this typified Christ, who assumed our nature, that he might be our

our *kinsman*, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, and being the only kinsman we have that is able to do it, to him belonged the right of redemption. As for all our other kinsmen, their shoe must be plucked off; (*Ruth* iv. 6, 7.) they cannot redeem; but Christ can, and hath redeemed the inheritance, which we by sin had forfeited and alienated, and made a new settlement of it upon all that by faith become allied to him. We know that this *redeemer liveth*, *Job* xix. 25. And some make this duty of the kinsman to signify the brotherly love that should be among Christians; inclining them to recover those that are fallen, and to restore them with the spirit of meekness.

4. That if the land were not redeemed before the year of jubilee, then it should return of course to him that had sold or mortgaged it, *ver. 28. In the jubilee it shall go out.* This was a figure of the free grace of God towards us in Christ, by which, and not by any price or merit of our own, we are restored to the favour of God, and become entitled to paradise, from which our first parents, and we in them, were expelled for disobedience.

5. A difference was made between houses in walled cities, and lands in the country, or houses in country villages. Houses in walled cities were more the fruits of their own industry, than land in the country, which was the immediate gift of God's bounty; and therefore if a man sold a house in a city, he might redeem it any time within a year after the sale, but otherwise it was confirmed to the purchaser for ever, and should not return, no not at the year of jubilee, *ver. 29, 30.* This provision was made to encourage strangers and proselytes to come and settle among them. Though they could not purchase lands in Canaan to them and their heirs, yet they might purchase houses in walled cities, which would be most convenient for them who were supposed to live by trade. But country houses could be disposed of no otherwise than as lands might.

6. A clause is added in favour of the Levites, by way of exception from these rules. (1.) Dwelling houses in the cities of the Levites might be redeemed at any time, and if not redeemed should revert in the year of jubilee, *ver. 32, 33.* because the Levites had no other possessions but cities, and their suburbs, and God would shew that the Levites were his peculiar care; and it was for the interest of the publick that they should not be impoverished, or wormed out of their inheritances. (2.) The fields adjoining to their cities (*Numb.* xxxv. 4, 5.) might not be sold at any time, for they belonged not to particular Levites, but to the city of the Levites, as a corporation, who could not alien without a wrong to their tribe; therefore if any of those fields were sold, the bargain was void, *ver. 34.* Even the Egyptians took care to preserve the priests lands, *Gen.* xlvii. 22. And there is no less reason for the taking of the maintenance of the gospel ministry under the special protection of Christian governments.

2. A law for the relief of the poor, and the tender usage of poor debtors; and these are of more general and perpetual obligation than the former.

1. The poor must be relieved, *ver. 35.* Here is, (1.) Our brother's poverty and distress supposed, *If thy brother be waxen poor*; not only thy brother by nation as a Jew, but thy brother by nature as a man, for it follows, *though he be a stranger or a sojourner.* All men are to be looked upon and treated as brethren, for *we have all one Father*, *Mal.* ii. 10. Though he be poor yet still he is thy brother, and is to be loved and owned as a brother. Poverty doth not destroy the relation. Though a son of Abraham, yet he may wax poor, and fall into decay. Note, Poverty and decay are great grievances, and very common; *The poor ye have always with you.* (2.) Our duty enjoined, *Thou shalt relieve him.* By sympathy, pitying the poor; by service, doing for them; and by supply, giving to them according to their necessity, and thine ability.

2. Poor debtors must not be oppressed. *If thy brother be waxen poor*, and have occasion to borrow money of thee for the necessary support of his family, *Take thou no usury of him*, either for money or victuals, *ver. 36, 37.* And thus far this law binds still, but could never be thought binding where money is borrowed for purchase of lands, trade, or other improvements, for there it is reasonable that the lender share with the borrower in the profit. The law here is plainly intended for the relief of the poor, to whom it is sometimes as great a charity to lend freely as to give. Observe the arguments here used against extortion. 1. God patronizeth the poor; *Fear thy God*, who will reckon with thee for all injuries done to the poor: thou fearest not them, but fear him.

2. Relieve the poor *that they may live with thee*, and some way or other they may be serviceable to thee. The rich can as ill spare the hands of the poor, as the poor can the purses of the rich.

3. The same argument is used to enforce this precept that preface all the ten commandments, *ver. 38. I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of Egypt.* Note, It becomes those that have received mercy to shew mercy. If God has been gracious to us, we ought not to be rigorous with our brethren.

39. ¶ And if thy brother *that dwelleth* by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bond-servant: 40. But as an hired servant,

and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubilee. 41. And then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return. 42. For they are my servants, which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: they shall not be sold as bondmen. 43. Thou shalt not rule over him with rigour, but shalt fear thy God. 44. Both thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. 45. Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you; of them shall ye buy; and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land: and they shall be your possession. 46. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession, they shall be your bondmen for ever: but over your brethren the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigour. 47. ¶ And if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother *that dwelleth* by him wax poor, and sell himself unto the stranger or sojourner by thee, or to the stock of the strangers family: 48. After that he is sold, he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him. 49. Either his uncle, or his uncle's son may redeem him, or any that is nigh of kin unto him of his family, may redeem him; or if he be able, he may redeem himself. 50. And he shall reckon with him that bought him, from the year that he was sold to him, unto the year of jubilee: and the price of his sale shall be according to the number of years, according to the time of an hired servant shall it be with him. 51. If there be yet many years behind, according unto them he shall give again the price of his redemption, out of the money that he was bought for. 52. And if there remain but few years unto the year of jubilee, then he shall count with him, and according unto his years shall he give him again the price of his redemption. 53. And as a yearly hired servant shall he be with him: and the other shall not rule with rigour over him in thy sight. 54. And if he be not redeemed in these years, then he shall go out in the year of jubilee, both he, and his children with him. 55. For unto me the children of Israel are servants, they are my servants whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

We have here the laws concerning servitude, designed to preserve the honour of the Jewish nation, as a free people, and rescued by a divine power out of the house of bondage, into the glorious liberty of God's sons, his first-born. Now the law is, 1. That a native Israelite should never be made a bondman for perpetuity. If he were sold for debt, or for a crime, by the house of judgment, he was to serve but six years, and to go out the seventh, that was appointed, *Exod.* xxi. 2. But if he sold himself, through extream poverty, having nothing at all left him to preserve his life, and it was to one of his own nation that he sold himself; in such a case it is here provided, (1.) That he should not serve as a bond-servant, *ver. 39.* nor be sold with the sale of a bondman, *ver. 42.* i. e. it must not be looked upon that his master that bought him had as absolute a property in him, as in a captive taken in war, that might be used, sold, and bequeathed at pleasure, as much as a man's cattle; no, he shall serve thee as a hired servant, whom the master has the use of only, but not a despotick power over. And the reason is, *They are my servants*, *ver. 42.* God doth not make his servants slaves, and therefore their brethren must not. God had redeemed them out of Egypt, and therefore they must never be exposed to sale as bondmen. The apostle applies this spiritually, *1 Cor.* vii. 23. *Ye are bought with a price, be not ye the servants of men, i. e. of the lusts of men, no nor of your own lusts; for being become the servants of God, we must not let sin reign in our mortal bodies*, *Rom.* vi. 12, 22. (2.) That while he did serve he should not be ruled with rigour, as the Israelites were in Egypt, *ver. 43.* Both his work and his usage must be such as was fitting for a son of Abraham. Masters are still required to give to their servants that which is just and equal, *Col.* iv. 1. They may be used, but must not be abused. Those masters that are always hectoring and domineering over their servants, taunting them, and trampling upon them, that are unreasonable in exacting work, and giving rebukes, and rule them with an high hand, forget that their master is in heaven; and what will they do when he riseth up? as holy Job reasons with himself, *Job* xxxi. 13, 14. (3.) That at the year of jubilee he should go out free, he and his children, and should return to his own family, *ver. 41.* This typified our redemption from the service of sin and Satan; by the grace of God in Christ, whose

whose truth makes us free, John viii. 32. The Jewish writers say, that for ten days before the jubilee trumpet sounded, the servants that were to be discharged by it did express their great joy by feasting, and wearing garlands on their heads: it is therefore called the joyful sound, Psal. lxxxix. 15. And we are thus to rejoice in the liberty we have by Christ.

2. That they might purchase bond-men of the heathen nations that were round about them, or of those strangers that sojourned among them, (except of those seven nations that were to be destroyed) and might claim a dominion over them, and entail them upon their families, as an inheritance, for the year of jubilee should give no discharge to them, ver. 44, 45, 46. Thus in our English plantations the Negroes only are used as slaves, how much to the credit of Christianity I shall not say. Now, 1. This authority they had over the bond-men they purchased from the neighbour nations, was in pursuance of the blessing of Jacob, Gen. xxvii. 29. *Let people serve thee.* 2. It figured the bringing in of the Gentiles to the service of Christ and his church. *Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance,* Psal. ii. 9. And it is promised, *Isa. lxi. 5. Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your vine-dressers;* see Rev. ii. 26, 27. *The upright shall have the dominion in the morning,* Psal. xlix. 14. 3. It intimates that none shall have the benefit of the gospel jubilee, but those only that are *Israelites indeed*, and the children of Abraham by faith: as for those that continue heathenish, they continue bond-men. See this turned upon the unbelieving Jews themselves, *Gal. iv. 25.* where Jerusalem, when she had rejected Christ, is said to be *in bondage with her children.* Let me only add here, that though they are not forbidden to rule their bond-men with rigour, yet the Jewish doctors say, It is the property of mercy, and way of wisdom, that a man should be compassionate, and not make his yoke heavy upon any servant that he hath.

3. That if an Israelite sold himself for a servant to a wealthy profelyte that sojourned among them, care should be taken that he should have the same advantages as if he had sold himself to an Israelite, and in some respects greater. 1. That he should have the same advantages, viz. not to serve as a bond-man, but as a hired servant, and not to be ruled with rigour (ver. 53.) in thy sight; which intimated, that the Jewish magistrates should particularly have an eye to him, and if he were abused should take cognizance of it, and redress his grievances, though the injured servant did not himself complain. Also, he was to go free at the year of jubilee, ver. 54. Though the sons of strangers might serve them for ever, yet the sons of Israel might not serve strangers for ever; yet the servant here having made himself a slave by his own act and deed, should not go out in the seventh year of release, but in the jubilee only. 2. That he should have this further advantage, that he might be redeemed again, before the year of jubilee, ver. 48, 49. He that had sold himself to an Israelite might, if ever he were able, redeem himself, but his relations had no right to redeem him; but if a man sold himself to a stranger, the Jews say, his relations were urged to redeem him; if they did not, it was fit he should be redeemed at the publick charge, which we find done, *Neh. v. 8.* The price of his ransom was to be computed according to the prospect of the year of jubilee, ver. 50, 51, 52. as in the redemption of land, ver. 15, 16. The learned bishop Patrick quotes one of the Jewish rabbins for an evangelical exposition of that appointment, ver. 48. *One of his brethren shall redeem him;* this redeemer, saith the Rabbi, is the Messiah, the son of David. They expected this Messiah to be their redeemer out of their captivity, and to restore them to their own land again; but we welcome him as the redeemer who shall come to Sion, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob, for he shall save his people from their sins; and under this notion there were those that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

CHAP. XXVI.

This chapter is a solemn conclusion of the main body of the Levitical law: The precepts that follow in this and the following book, either relate to some particular matters; or are repetitions and explications of the foregoing institutions. Now this chapter contains a general enforcement of all those laws by promises of reward, in case of obedience on the one hand, and threatenings of punishment for disobedience on the other hand; the former to work upon hope, the latter on fear, those two handles of the soul, by which it is taken hold of and managed. Here is, 1. A repetition of two or three of the principal of the commandments, ver. 1, 2. 2. An inviting promise of all good things, if they would but keep God's commandments, ver. 3—13. 3. A terrible threatening of ruining judgments which would be brought upon them, if they were refractory and disobedient, ver. 14—39. 4. A gracious promise of the return of mercy to those of them that would repent and reform, ver. 40, &c. Deut. xxviii. is parallel to this.

1. YE shall make you no idols, nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I am the LORD your God. 2. Ye

shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the LORD. 3. ¶ If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; 4. Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. 5. And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. 6. And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land. 7. And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. 8. And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword. 9. For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you. 10. And ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new. 11. And I will set my tabernacle amongst you; and my soul shall not abhor you. 12. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people. 13. I am the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bond-men; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright.

Here is, 1. The inculcating of those precepts of the law which were of the greatest consequence, and by which especially their obedience will be tried, ver. 1, 2. They are the abstract of the second and fourth commandments; which, as they are by much the largest in the decalogue, so they are most frequently insisted on in other parts of the law. As when a master has given many things in charge to his servant, he concludes with the repetition of those things which were of the greatest importance, and which the servant was most in danger of neglecting, bidding him, whatever he did, be sure to remember those; so here, God by Moses, after many precepts, closes all with a special charge to observe these two great commandments. (1.) Be sure you never worship images, nor ever make any sort of image or pictures for a religious use, ver. 1. No sin more provoking to God than this, and yet none that they were more addicted to, and which afterwards proved of more pernicious consequence to them. Next to God's being, unity, and universal influence, it is necessary we know and believe, that he is an infinite Spirit, and therefore to represent him by an image in the making of it, to confine him to an image in the consecrating of it, and to worship him by an image in bowing down to it; *changes his truth into a lie, and his glory into shame,* as much as any thing. (2.) Be sure you keep up a great veneration for sabbaths, and religious assemblies, ver. 2. As nothing tends more to corrupt religion than the use of images in devotion, so nothing contributes more to the support of it than keeping the sabbaths, and reverencing the sanctuary. These make up very much of the instrumental part of religion, by which the essentials of it are kept up. Therefore we find in the prophets, that next to the sin of idolatry, there is no sin for which the Jews are more frequently reprov'd and threatned, than the profanation of the sabbath day.

2. Great encouragements given them to live in a constant obedience to all God's commandments, largely and strongly assuring them that if they did so, they should be a happy people, and should be blessed with all the good things they could desire. Human governments enforce their laws with penalties to be inflicted for the breach of them; but God will be known as the rewarder of those that seek and serve him.

Let us take a view of these great and precious promises, which though they relate chiefly to the life that now is, and to the publick national concerns of that people, yet they were typical of the spiritual blessings entailed by the covenant of grace upon all believers through Christ.

1. Plenty and abundance of the fruits of the earth. They should have seasonable rain, neither too little nor too much, but what was requisite for their land, which was watered with the dew of heaven, Deut. xi. 10, 11. that it might yield its increase, ver. 4. The dependence which the fruitfulness of the earth be-neath hath upon the influences of heaven above, is a sensible intimation to us, that every good and perfect gift must be expected from above, from the Father of lights. It is promised, that the earth should produce its fruits in such great abundance, that they would be kept in full employment, during both the harvest and the vintage, to gather it in, ver. 5. Before they had reaped their corn, and thrashed it, the vintage would be ready; and before they had finished their vintage, it would be high time to begin their sowing. Long harvests are often with us the consequences of bad weather, but with them they should be the effects of a great increase. This signified the plenty of grace which should be poured out in gospel times, when the plowman should overtake the

the reaper, Amos ix. 13. and a great harvest of souls should be gathered in to Christ. The plenty should be so great, that they should bring forth the old to be given away to the poor, *because of the new*, to make room for it in their barns, which yet they would not pull down to build greater, as that rich fool, Luke xii. 19. for God gave them this abundance to be laid out, not to be hoarded up from one year to another. *He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him*, Prov. xi. 26. That promise, *Mal. iii. 10. I will pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it*, explains this here, ver. 10. And that which crowns this blessing of plenty is, that, ver. 5. you shall eat your bread to the full; which intimates, not only that they should have abundance, but that they should have content, and satisfaction in it. They should have enough, and should know when they had enough. Thus the meek shall eat and be satisfied, Psal. xxii. 26.

2. Peace under the divine protection, ver. 5. *Ye shall dwell in your land safely*; both really safe, and safe in your own apprehension; ye shall lie down to rest in the power and promise of God, and not only none shall hurt you, but none shall so much as make you afraid, ver. 6. see Psal. iv. 8. They should not be infested with wild beasts, those should be rid out of the land, or, as it is promised Job v. 23. should be at peace with them; nor should they be terrified with the alarms of war, *neither shall the sword go through your land*. This holy security is promised to all the faithful, Psal. xci. 1, &c. Those must needs dwell in safety, that dwell in God, Job xi. 18, 19.

3. Victory and success in their wars abroad, while they had peace and tranquillity at home, ver. 7, 8. And that the hand of God should so signally appear with them in their conquests, that no disproportion of numbers should make against them, *Five of you shall have courage to attack, and strength to chase and defeat a hundred*, as Jonathan did, 1 Sam. xiv. 13. experiencing the truth of his own maxim, ver. 6. that it is all one with the Lord to save by many or by few.

4. The increase of their people. *I will make you fruitful, and multiply you*, ver. 9. Thus the promise made to Abraham must be fulfilled, that his seed should be *as the dust of the earth*; and much more numerous they had been, if they had not by their sin cut themselves short. It is promised to the gospel church that it shall be fruitful, Job xv. 16.

5. The favour of God, which is the fountain of all good. *I will have respect unto you*, ver. 9. If the eye of our faith be unto God, the eye of his favour will be unto us. More is implied than is expressed in that promise, *My soul shall not abhor you*, ver. 11. as there is in that threatening, *My soul shall have no pleasure in him*, Heb. x. 38. Though there was that among them which might justly have alienated him from them, yet if they would closely adhere to his institutions he would not abhor them.

6. The tokens of his presence in and by his ordinances, *I will set my tabernacle among you*, ver. 11. It was their honour and advantage that God's tabernacle was lately erected among them, but he here lets them know, that the continuance and establishment of it depended upon their good behaviour. The tabernacle that was now set should be settled if they would be obedient, else not. Note, The way to have God's ordinances fix among us, as a nail in a sure place, is to cleave closely to the institution of them. It is added, ver. 12. *I will walk among you*, with delight and satisfaction, as a man in his garden; I will keep up communion with you, as a man walking with his friend. This seems to be alluded to, Rev. ii. 1. where Christ is said to walk in the midst of the golden candlesticks.

7. The grace of the covenant, as the fountain and foundation, the sweetness and security of all these blessings, *I will establish my covenant with you*, ver. 9. Let them perform their part of the covenant, and God would not fail to perform his. All covenant blessings are summed up in the covenant relation, ver. 12. *I will be your God, and ye shall be my people*; and grounded upon their redemption, ver. 13. *I am your God, because I brought you forth out of the land of Egypt*. Having purchased them he would own them, and never cast them off till they cast him off. He broke their yoke, and made them go upright, i. e. their deliverance out of Egypt put them into a state both of ease and honour, that being delivered out of the hands of their enemies, they might serve God without fear, each one walking in his uprightness. When Israel rejected Christ, and was therefore rejected by him, their back is said to be bowed down always, under the burthen of their guilt, which was heavier than that of their bondage in Egypt, Rom. xi. 10.

14. ¶ But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; 15. And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant: 16. I also will do this unto you, I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. 17. And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies:

they that hate you shall reign over you, and ye shall flee when none pursueth you. 18. And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. 19. And I will break the pride of your power: and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass: 20. And your strength shall be spent in vain: for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits. 21. ¶ And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me, I will bring seven times more plagues upon you, according to your sins. 22. I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number, and your high-ways shall be desolate. 23. And if ye will not be reformed by me by these things; but will walk contrary unto me: 24. Then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins. 25. And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant: and when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you, and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy. 26. And when I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver you your bread again by weight: and ye shall eat and not be satisfied. 27. And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me: 28. Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. 29. And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat. 30. And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcases upon the carcases of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you. 31. And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation: and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours. 32. And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein, shall be astonished at it. 33. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. 34. Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths. 35. As long as it lieth desolate, it shall rest: because it did not rest in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it. 36. And upon them that are left alive of you, I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword: and they shall fall when none pursueth. 37. And they shall fall one upon another, as it were before a sword, when none pursueth: and ye shall have no power to stand before your enemies. 38. And ye shall perish among the heathen, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. 39. And they that are left of you, shall pine away in their iniquity in your enemies lands; and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them.

After God had set the blessing before them, the life and good which would make them a happy people if they would be obedient, he here sets the curse before them, the death and evil which would make them as miserable if they were disobedient. Let them not think themselves so deeply rooted as that God's power could not ruin them, or so highly favoured, as that his justice would not ruin them if they revolted from him, and rebelled against him; no, *You only have I known, therefore I will punish you soonest and foremost*, Amos iii. 2.

Observe, 1. How their sin is described, which would bring all this misery upon them. Not sins of ignorance and infirmity, God had provided sacrifices for those; not the sins they repented of and forsook, but the sins that were presumptuously committed, and obstinately persisted in.

Two things would certainly bring this ruin upon them.

1. A contempt of God's commandments, ver. 14. *If ye will not hearken to me* speaking to you by the law, nor do all these commandments, that is, desire and endeavour to do them; and wherein you miss it, make use of the prescribed remedies. Thus their sin is supposed to begin in mere carelessness, and neglect, and omission: That is bad enough, but it makes way for worse; for they are brought in, ver. 15. (1.) *Despising God's statutes*, both the duties enjoined, and the authority enjoining them, thinking meanly of the law and the law-maker. Note, Those are hastning apace to their own ruin, who begin to think it below them to be religious. (2.) *Abhorring his judgments*, their very souls abhorring

ring them. Note, They that begin to despise religion, will come by degrees to lothe it; and mean thoughts of it will ripen into ill thoughts of it; they that turn from it, will turn against it, and their hearts rise at it. (3.) *Breaking his covenant.* Though every breach of the commandment do not amount to a breach of the covenant, we were undone if it did; yet when men are come to such a pitch of impiety, as to despise and abhor the commandment, the next step will be to disown God, and all relation to him. They that reject the precept, will come at last to renounce the covenant. Observe, It is God's covenant they break: he made it, but they break it. Note, If a covenant be made and kept between God and man, God must have all the honour. But if ever it be broken, man must bear all the blame; on him shall this breach be.

2. A contempt of his corrections. Even their disobedience would not have been their destruction, if they had not been obstinate and impenitent in it, notwithstanding the methods God took to reclaim them. Their contempt of God's word would not have brought them to ruin, if they had not added to that a contempt of his rod, which should have brought them to repentance. Three ways this is expressed. (1.) *If you will not for all this hearken to me,* ver. 18, 21, 27. If ye will not learn obedience by the things which you suffer, but be as deaf to the loud alarms of God's judgments, as you have been to the close reasonings of his word, and the secret whispers of your own consciences, you are obstinate indeed. (2.) *If ye will walk contrary to me,* ver. 21, 23, 27. All sinners walk contrary to God, to his truths, laws, and counsels, but those especially that are incorrigible under his judgments. The design of the rod is to humble them, and soften them, and bring them to repentance; but if instead of this their hearts are more hardened and exasperated against God, and *in their distresses they trespass yet more against him,* 2 Chron. xxviii. 22. this is walking contrary to God. Some read it, If ye walk at all adventures with me, carelessly and presumptuously, as if you heeded not either what you do, whether it be right or wrong, or what God doth with you, whether it be for you or against you, blundering on in wilful ignorance. (3.) *If ye will not be reformed by these things.* God's design in punishing is to reform, by giving men sensible convictions of the evil of sin, and obliging them to seek unto him for relief: this is the primary intention; but those that will not be reformed by the judgments of God, must expect to be ruined by them. Those have a great deal to answer for, that have been long and oft under God's correcting hand, and yet go on frowardly in a sinful way; sick and in pain, and yet not reformed; crossed and impoverished, and yet not reformed; broken with breach upon breach, yet *not returning to the Lord,* Amos iv. 6, &c.

2. How the misery is described, which their sin would bring upon them; under two heads.

1. God himself would be against them; and this is the root and cause of all their misery. (1.) *I will set my face against you,* ver. 17. i. e. I will set my self against you, set my self to ruin you. These proud sinners God will resist, and face those down that confront his authority. Or, the face is put for the anger; I will shew my self highly displeased at you. (2.) *I will walk contrary to you,* ver. 24, 28. *with the froward he will wrestle,* Psal. xviii. 26. When God in his providence thwarts the designs of a people, which they thought well laid, crosseth their purposes, breaks their measures, blasts their endeavours, and disappoints their expectations, then he walks contrary to them. Note, There is nothing got by striving with God Almighty, for he will either break the heart or break the neck of those that contend with him; will bring them either to repentance or ruin. I will walk at all adventures with you, so some read it; all covenant loving kindness shall be forgotten, and I will leave you to common providence. Note, Those that cast God off, it is just with him to cast them off. (3.) As they continued obstinate, the judgments should encrease yet more upon them. If the first sensible tokens of God's displeasure do not attain their end to humble and reform them, then, ver. 18. *I will punish you seven times more,* and again, ver. 21. *I will bring seven times more plagues,* and ver. 24. *I will punish you yet seven times,* and ver. 28. *I even I will chastise you seven times for your sins.* Note, If lesser judgments do not do their work, God will send greater; for when he judgeth he will overcome. If true repentance do not stay process, it will go on till execution be taken out. Those that are obstinate and incorrigible, when they have weathered one storm, must expect another more violent; and how severely soever they are punished, till they are in hell, still they must say there is worse behind unless they repent. If the *funder have hitherto melted in vain,* (Jer. vi. 29.) the furnace will be heated *seven times hotter,* (a proverbial expression used Dan. iii. 19.) and again and again *seven times hotter;* and who among us can dwell with such devouring fire? God doth not begin with the forest judgments, to shew that he is patient, and delights not in the death of sinners; but if they repent not he will proceed to the forest, to shew that he is righteous, and that he will not be mocked, or set at defiance. (4.) Their misery is completed in that threatening, ver. 30. *My soul shall abhor you.* That man is as miserable as he can be whom God abhors; for his resentments are just and effective. Thus if any man draw back, as these here are supposed to do, *God's soul shall have no pleasure*

in them, Heb. x. 38. and he will *spue them out of his mouth,* Rev. iii. 16. It is spoken of as strange, and yet too true, *Hath thy soul lothed Sion?* Jer. xiv. 19.

2. The whole creation would be at war with them. All God's fore judgments would be sent against them; for he hath many arrows in his quiver. The threatnings here are very partiular, because really they were prophecies; and he that foresaw all their rebellions, knew they would prove so; see Deut. xxxi. 16, 29. This long roll of threatnings shews, that evil pursues sinners.

Here is, 1. Temporal judgments threatened. (1.) Diseases of body, which should be epidemical, ver. 16. *I will appoint over you as task-masters to rule you with rigour, terror, consumption, and the burning ague.* What we translate terror, some think signifies a particular disease, probably (saith the learned bishop Patrick) the falling sickness, which is terror indeed: all chronical diseases are included in the consumption; and all acute diseases in the burning ague, or fever. These consume the eyes, and cause sorrow both to those that are visited with them, and to their friends and relations. Note, All diseases are God's servants, and do what he appoints them, and are often used as scourges wherewith he chastiseth a provoking people. The pestilence is threatened, ver. 25. to meet them when they are gathered together in their cities, for fear of the sword. And the greater the concourse of people is, the greater desolation doth the pestilence make; and when it gets among the soldiers that should defend a place, it is of most fatal consequence. (2.) Famine and scarcity of bread, which should be brought upon them several ways; as 1. By plunder, ver. 16. *Your enemies shall eat it up,* and carry it off, as the Midianites did, Judg. vi. 5, 6. 2. By unseasonable weather, especially the want of rain, ver. 19. *I will make your heaven as iron,* letting fall no rain, but reflecting heat, and then the earth would of course be as dry and hard as brass; and their labour in plowing and sowing would be in vain, ver. 20. For the increase of the earth depends upon God's good providence, more than upon man's good husbandry. This should be the breaking of the *staff of bread,* (ver. 26.) which life leans upon, and is supported by, and which perhaps they had leaned more upon, than on God's blessing. There should be so great a dearth of corn, that whereas every family used to fill an oven of their own with household-bread, now ten families should have to fill but one oven; which would bring themselves and their children and servants to short allowance, so that they should *eat and not be satisfied.* The less they had, the more craving should their appetites be. 3. By the besieging of their cities; for sure that must be supposed to reduce them to such an extremity, as that they should *eat the flesh of their sons and daughters,* ver. 29. (3.) War, and the prevalency of their enemies over them; *Ye shall be slain before your enemies,* ver. 17. Your choice men shall die in battel, and *they that hate you shall reign over you,* and justly, since you were not willing that the God that loved you should reign over you, 2 Chron. xii. 8. Miserable is that people whose enemies are their rulers, and have got dominion over them; or whose rulers are become their enemies, and under-hand seek the ruin of their interests. Thus God would *break the pride of their power,* ver. 19. God had given them power over the nations; but when they instead of being thankful for that power, and improving it for the service of God's kingdom, grew proud of it, and perverted the intentions of it, it was just with God to break it. Thus God would *bring a sword upon them to avenge the quarrel of his covenant,* ver. 25. Note, God has a just quarrel with those that break covenant with him, for he will not be mocked by the treachery of perfidious men; and one way or other he will avenge this quarrel upon those that play fast and loose with him. (4.) Wild beasts, lions and bears and wolves, which should encrease upon them, and tear in pieces all that came in their way, ver. 22. as we read of two bears that in an instant killed forty-two children, 2 Kings ii. 24. This is one of the four fore judgments threatened, Ezek. xiv. 21. which plainly refers to this chapter. Man was made to have dominion over the creatures, and though many of them are stronger than he, yet none of them could have hurt him, nay all of them should have served him, if he had not first shaken off God's dominion, and so lost his own; and now the creatures are in rebellion against him that is in rebellion against his maker, and when the Lord of those hosts pleaseth, are the executioners of his wrath, and ministers of his justice. (5.) Captivity, or dispersion; *I will scatter you among the heathen,* ver. 33. *in your enemies land,* ver. 34. Never were more people so incorporated and united among themselves as they were, but for their sin God would scatter them, so that they should be lost among the heathen, from whom God had graciously distinguished them, but with whom they had wickedly mingled themselves. Yet when they were scattered, divine justice had not done with them, but would draw out a sword after them, which should find them out, and follow them wherever they were: God's judgments, as they cannot be outfaced, so they cannot be outrun. (6.) The utter ruin and desolation of their land; which should be so remarkable, that their very enemies themselves, who had helped it forward, should in the review be astonished at it, ver. 32. 1.) Their cities should be waste, forsaken, uninhabited, and all the buildings destroyed; those that escaped the desolations of war should fall to decay of themselves. (2.) Their sanctuaries should

should be a desolation, *i. e.* their synagogues where they met for religious worship every sabbath, as well as their tabernacle, where they met thrice a year. (3.) The country it self should be desolate, not tilled or husbanded, *ver.* 34, 35. then the land should enjoy its sabbaths, because they had not religiously observed the sabbatical years which God appointed them. They tilled their ground when God would have them let it rest, justly therefore were they driven out of it; and the expression intimates, that the ground it self was pleased and easy, when it was rid of the burthen of such sinners, under which it had groaned, *Rom.* viii. 20, &c. The captivity in Babylon lasted seventy years, and so long the land enjoyed her sabbaths, as is said *2 Chron.* xxxvi. 21. with reference to this here. (7.) The destruction of their idols, though rather a mercy than a judgment, yet being a necessary piece of justice, is here mentioned, to shew what would be the sin that would bring all these miseries upon them, *ver.* 30. *I will destroy your high-places.* Those that will not be parted from their sins by the commands of God, shall be parted from them by his judgments; since they would not destroy their high-places, God would. And to upbraid them with the unreasonable fondness they had shewed for their idols, it is foretold, that their *carcasses should be cast upon the carcasses of their idols.* They that are wedded to their lusts, sooner or later will have enough of them. Their idols would not be able to help either themselves or their worshippers; but they that made them being like unto them, both should perish alike, and fall together as blind into the ditch.

2. Spiritual judgments are here threatened, which should seize the mind; for he that made that can, when he pleaseth, make his sword approach to it.

It is here threatened, 1. That they should find no acceptance with God, *ver.* 31. *I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours.* Though the judgments of God upon them did not part between them and their sins, yet they extorted incense from them; but in vain, even their incense was an abomination, *Isa.* i. 11.

2. That they should have no courage in their wars, but should be quite dispirited and disheartened. They should not only fear and flee, (*ver.* 17.) but fear and fall when none pursueth, *ver.* 36. A guilty conscience would be their continual terror, so that not only the sound of a trumpet, but the very sound of a leaf should chase them. Note, Those that cast off the fear of God, expose themselves to the fear of every thing else, *Prov.* xxviii. 1. Their very fears should dash them one against another, *ver.* 37, 38. And they that had increased one another's guilt, would now increase one another's fears.

3. That they should have no hope of the forgiveness of their sins, *ver.* 39. *They shall pine away in their iniquity, and how should they then live?* *Ezek.* xxxiii. 10. Note, It is a righteous thing with God to leave those to despair of pardon, that have presumed to sin; and it is owing to free grace, if we are not abandoned to pine away in the iniquity we were born in, and have lived in.

40. If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; 41. And that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: 42. Then I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land; 43. The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them: and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity: because, even because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes. 44. And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I am the LORD their God. 45. But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt, in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God: I am the LORD. 46. These are the statutes, and judgments, and laws, which the LORD made between him and the children of Israel in mount Sinai, by the hand of Moses.

Here the chapter concludes with gracious promises of the return of God's favour to them upon their repentance, that they might not (unless it were their own fault) pine away in their iniquity. Behold with wonder the riches of God's mercy to a people that had obstinately stood it out against the judgments of God, and would never think of surrendering till they were reduced to the last extremity. Yet turn ye to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope, *Zech.* ix. 12. As bad as things are, they may be mended. Yet there is hope in Israel.

Observe, 1. How the repentance is described, which would qualify them for this mercy, *ver.* 41, 42. The instances of it are three. (1.) Confession, by which they must give glory to God, and take shame to themselves. There must be a confession of sin; their own, and their fathers, which they must lament the guilt of, because they feel the smart of it; that thus they may cut off the entail of wrath: they must in their confession put sin under its worst character, as *walking contrary to God*; that is the sinfulness of sin, the worst thing in it, and which in our repentance we should especially bewail. There must also be a confession of wrath; they must overlook the instruments of their trouble, and the second causes, and confess that God has *walked contrary to them*, and so dealt with them according to their sins. Such a confession as this we find made by Daniel just before the dawning of the day of their deliverance, *chap.* ix. and the like, *Ezra* ix. and *Neh.* ix. (2.) Remorse and godly sorrow for sin; *If their uncircumcised heart be humbled.* An impenitent unbelieving unhumiliated heart is called an uncircumcised heart, the heart of a Gentile, that is a stranger to God, rather than the heart of an Israelite in covenant with him. True circumcision is of the heart, *Rom.* ii. 29. without which the circumcision of the flesh availed nothing, *Jer.* ix. 26. Now in repentance this uncircumcised heart was humbled, *i. e.* it was truly broken and contrite for sin. Note, An humble heart under humbling providences, prepares for deliverance and true comfort. (3.) Submission to the justice of God in all his dealings; if they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity, *ver.* 41. and again, *ver.* 43. *i. e.* if they justify God and condemn themselves, patiently bear the punishment as that which they have well deserved, and carefully answer the ends of it, as that which God has well designed, accept it as a kindness, take it as physick, and improve it, then they are penitents indeed.

2. How the mercy is described, which they should obtain upon their repentance. (1.) They should not be abandoned; *Though they have despised my judgments, yet for all that I will not cast them away*, *ver.* 43, 44. He speaks as a tender father that cannot find in his heart to disinherit a son that has been very provoking. *How shall I do it?* *Hos.* xi. 8, 9. Till he had laid the foundations of a church for himself in the Gentile world, the Jewish church was not quite forsaken, nor cast away. (2.) They should be remembered; *I will remember the land with favour*, which is grounded upon the promise before, *I will remember my covenant*, *ver.* 42. which is repeated, *ver.* 45. God is said to remember the covenant, when he performs the promises of it, purely for his faithfulness sake; not because there is any thing in us to recommend us to his favour, but because he will be as good as his word. This is the church's plea, *Psal.* lxxiv. 20. *Have respect unto the covenant.* He will remember the constitution of the covenant, which is such as leaves room for repentance, and promiseth pardon upon repentance; and the mediator of the covenant, who was promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and was sent when the fulness of time came, in remembrance of that holy covenant. The word covenant is thrice repeated, to intimate, that God is ever mindful of it, and would have us to be so. The persons also with whom the covenant was made, are mentioned in an unusual manner, *per modum ascensus*, beginning with Jacob, to lead them gradually to the most ancient promise, which was made to the father of the faithful: thus *Mich.* vii. 20. he is said to perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham. He will for their sakes, (*ver.* 45.) not their merit's sake, but their benefit's sake, remember the covenant of their ancestors, and upon that score shew kindness to them, though most unworthy; they are therefore said to be, *touching the election, beloved for the fathers sakes*, *Rom.* xi. 28. Note, When those that have walked contrary to God in a way of sin, return to him by sincere repentance, though he has walked contrary to them in a way of judgment, he will return to them in a way of special mercy, pursuant to the covenants of redemption and grace. None are so ready to repent, as God is to forgive upon repentance, through Christ, who is given for a covenant.

Lastly, These are said to be the laws which the Lord made between him and the children of Israel, *ver.* 46. His communion with his church is kept up by his law. He manifests not only his dominion over them, but his favour to them, by giving them his law; and they manifest not only their holy fear, but their holy love, by the observance of it; and thus it is made between them, rather as a covenant than a law; for he draws with the cords of a man.

C H A P. XXVII.

The last verse of the foregoing chapter seemed to close up this statute-book, yet this chapter is added as an appendix: having given laws concerning appointed instituted services, here he directs concerning vows and voluntary services, the free-will offerings of their mouth. Perhaps some devout serious people among them might be so affected with what Moses had delivered to them in the foregoing chapter, as in a pang of zeal to consecrate themselves or their children or estates to him: this, because honestly meant, God would accept of; but because men are apt to repent such vows, he leaves room for the redemption of what had been so consecrated at a certain rate. Here is, 1. The law concerning what was sanctified to God; persons, *ver.* 2—8. Cattle clean or unclean, *ver.* 9—13. Houses

Houses and lands, ver. 14—25. With an exception of firstlings, ver. 26, 27. 2. Concerning what was devoted, ver. 28, 29. 3. Concerning tithes, ver. 30—34.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When a man shall make a singular vow, the persons *shall be* for the LORD, by thy estimation. 3. And thy estimation shall be, of the male from twenty years old, even unto sixty years old; even thy estimation shall be fifty shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary. 4. And if *it be* a female, then thy estimation shall be thirty shekels. 5. And if *it be* from a month old, even unto twenty years old; then thy estimation shall be of the male twenty shekels, and for the female ten shekels. 6. And if *it be* from a month old, even unto five years old; then thy estimation shall be of the male, five shekels of silver, and for the female, thy estimation *shall be* three shekels of silver. 7. And if *it be* from sixty years old, and above; if *it be* a male, then thy estimation shall be fifteen shekels, and for the female ten shekels. 8. But if he be poorer than thy estimation, then he shall present himself before the priest, and the priest shall value him: according to his ability that vowed, shall the priest value him. 9. And if *it be* a beast whereof men bring an offering unto the LORD; all that *any man* giveth of such unto the LORD, shall be holy. 10. He shall not alter it, nor change it, a good for a bad, or a bad for a good: and if he shall at all change beast for beast, then it and the exchange thereof shall be holy. 11. And if *it be* any unclean beast, of which they do not offer a sacrifice unto the LORD; then he shall present the beast before the priest: 12. And the priest shall value it, whether it be good or bad: as thou valuest it, *who art* the priest, so shall it be. 13. But if he will at all redeem it, then he shall add a fifth *part* thereof unto thy estimation.

This is part of the law concerning singular vows, extraordinary ones, which though God did not expressly insist on, yet if they were consistent with, and conformable to, the general precepts, he would be well pleased with. Note, We should not only ask what must we do, but what may we do, for the glory and honour of God? As the *liberal deviseth liberal things*, (Isa. xxxii. 8.) so the pious deviseth pious things, and the enlarged heart would willingly do something extraordinary in the service of so good a master as God is. When we receive or expect some singular mercy, it is good to honour God with some singular vow.

1. The case is here put of persons vowed to God by a singular vow, ver. 2. If a man consecrated himself, or a child to the service of the tabernacle, to be employed there in some inferior office, as sweeping the floor, carrying out ashes, running on errands, or the like, *the person so consecrated shall be for the Lord*, i. e. God will graciously accept the good will; *Thou didst well that it was in thine heart*, (2 Chron. vi. 8.) but forasmuch as he had no occasion to use their service about the tabernacle, a whole tribe being appropriated to the use of it, those that were thus vowed were to be redeemed, and the money paid for their redemption was employed for the repair of the sanctuary, or other uses of it; as appears by 2 Kings xii. 4. where it is called in the margin, *the money of the souls of his estimation*.

A book of rates is accordingly provided here, by which the priests were to go in their estimation. Here is, 1. The rate of the middle aged between twenty and threescore, these were valued highest, because most serviceable; a male fifty shekels, and the female thirty, ver. 3, 4. The females were then less esteemed, but not so in Christ; for in *Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female*, Gal. iii. 28. Note, Those that are in the prime of their time, must look upon themselves as obliged to do more in the service of God and their generation, than can be expected either from minors, that are not yet arrived to their usefulness, or from the aged, that have survived it. 2. The rate of the youth between five years old and twenty was less, because they were then less capable of doing service, ver. 5. 3. Infants under five years old were capable of being vowed to God by their parents, even before they were born, as Samuel was, but not to be presented and redeemed till a month old; that as one sabbath passed over them before they were circumcised, so one new moon might pass over them before they were estimated; and their valuation was but small, ver. 6. Samuel, who was thus vowed to God, was not redeemed, because he was a Levite, and a particular favourite, and therefore was employed in his childhood in the service of the tabernacle. 4. The aged are valued less than youth, but more than children, ver. 7. And the Hebrews observe, that the rate of an aged woman is two parts of three to that of an aged man, so that in that age the female came nearest to the value of the male, which occasioned (as bishop Patrick quotes it here) this saying among them, *That an old woman in a house, is a treasure in a* No. 10.

house. St. Paul sets a great value upon the aged women, when he makes them *teachers of good things*, Tit. ii. 3. 5. The poor shall be valued according to their ability, ver. 8. Something they must pay, that they might learn not to be rash in vowing to God, for *he hath no pleasure in fools*, Eccl. v. 4. Yet not more than his ability, but *secundum tenementum*, that he might not ruin himself and his family by his zeal. Note, God expects and requires from men, according to what they have, and not according to what they have not, Luke xxi. 4.

2. The case is put of beasts vowed to God. 1. If it were a clean beast, such as was offered in sacrifice, it must not be redeemed, nor any equivalent given for it; *it shall be holy*, ver. 9, 10. after it was vowed it was not to be put to any common use, nor changed upon second thoughts; but it must be either offered upon the altar, or if through any blemish it was not meet to be offered, he that vowed it should not take advantage of that, but the priests should have it for their own use, (for they were God's receivers) or it should be sold for the service of the sanctuary. This teacheth caution in making vows, and constancy in keeping them when they are made; for *it is a snare to a man to devour that which is holy, and after vows to make enquiry*, Prov. xx. 25. And to this that rule of charity seems to allude, 2 Cor. ix. 7. *Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give*. 3. If it were an unclean beast, it should go to the use of the priest at such a value; but he that vowed it upon paying that value in money, and adding a fifth part more to it, might redeem it if he pleased, ver. 11, 12, 13. It was fit men should smart for their inconstancy. God has let us know his mind concerning his service, and he is not pleased if we do not know our own. God expects that those that deal with him should be at a point, and say what they will stand to.

14. ¶ And when a man shall sanctify his house to be holy unto the LORD: then the priest shall estimate it, whether it be good or bad: as the priest shall estimate it, so shall it stand. 15. And if he that sanctified it, will redeem his house, then he shall add the fifth *part* of the money of thy estimation unto it, and it shall be his. 16. And if a man shall sanctify unto the LORD *some part* of a field of his possession; then thy estimation shall be according to the seed thereof: an homer of barley-seed *shall be valued* at fifty shekels of silver. 17. If he sanctify his field from the year of jubilee, according to thy estimation it shall stand. 18. But if he sanctify his field after the jubilee; then the priest shall reckon unto him the money according to the years that remain, even unto the year of the jubilee, and it shall be abated from thy estimation. 19. And if he that sanctified the field will in any wise redeem it; then he shall add the fifth *part* of the money of thy estimation unto it, and it shall be assured to him. 20. And if he will not redeem the field, or if he have sold the field to another man; it shall not be redeemed any more. 21. But the field, when it goeth out in the jubilee, shall be holy unto the LORD, as a field devoted: the possession thereof shall be the priests. 22. And if a man sanctify unto the LORD a field which he hath bought, which is not of the fields of his possession; 23. Then the priest shall reckon unto him the worth of thy estimation, *even* unto the year of the jubilee: and he shall give thine estimation in that day, *as* a holy thing unto the LORD. 24. In the year of the jubilee, the field shall return unto him of whom it was bought, *even* to him to whom the possession of the land *did belong*. 25. And all thy estimation shall be according to the shekel of the sanctuary: twenty gerahs shall be the shekel.

Here is the law concerning real estates dedicated to the service of God by a singular vow. 1. Suppose a man in his zeal for the honour of God *sanctify his house to God*, ver. 14. the house must be valued by the priest, and the money got by the sale of it was to be converted to the use of the sanctuary, which by degrees came to be greatly enriched with *dedicated things*, 1 Kings xv. 15. But if the owner be minded to redeem it himself, he must not have it so cheap as another, but must add a fifth part to the price, for he should have considered before he had vowed it, ver. 15. To him that was necessitous God would abate of the estimation of himself, ver. 8. But to him that was fickle and humour-some, and whose second thoughts inclined more to the world and his secular interest, than his first, God would rise in the price. Blessed be God there is a way of sanctifying our *houses to be holy unto the Lord*, without either selling them, or buying them. If we and our houses *serve the Lord*, if religion rule in them, and we *put away iniquity far from them*, and have a church in our house, holiness to the Lord is written upon it, it is his, and he will dwell with us in it. 2. Suppose a man sanctify some part of his land to the Lord, giving it to pious uses, then a difference must

must be made between land that came to the donor by descent, and that which came by purchase, and accordingly the case altered. (1.) If it were the inheritance of his fathers, here called the *field of his possession*, which pertained to his family from the first division of Canaan, he might not give it all, no not to the sanctuary; God would not admit such a degree of zeal as ruined a man's family. But he might sanctify or dedicate only some part of it, *ver. 16.* And in that case, 1. The land was to be valued (as our countrymen commonly compute land) by so many measures sowing of barley. So much land as would take a homer, or chomer of barley, which contained ten ephahs, *Ezek. xlv. 11.* (not as some have here mistaken it, an omer, which was but a tenth part of one ephah, *Exod. xvi. 36.*) was valued at fifty shekels, a moderate price, *ver. 16.* and that, if it were sanctified immediately from the year of jubilee, *ver. 17.* But if some years after, there was to be a discount accordingly, even of that price, *ver. 18.* And, 2. When the value was fixed, the donor might, if he pleased, redeem it for sixty shekels the homers sowing, which was with the addition of a fifth part, the money then went to the sanctuary, and the land reverted to him that had sanctified it, *ver. 19.* But if he would not redeem it, and the priest sold it to another, then at the year of jubilee, beyond which the sale could not go, the land came to the priests, and was theirs for ever, *ver. 20, 21.* Note, What is given to the Lord, ought not to be given with a power of revocation: what is devoted to the Lord must be his for ever by a perpetual covenant. (2.) If the land were his own purchase, and came not to him from his ancestors, then not the land itself, but the value of it, was to be given to the priests for pious uses, *ver. 22, 23, 24.* It was supposed, that those who by the blessing of God were grown so rich as to become purchasers, would think themselves obliged in gratitude to sanctify some part of their purchase, at least (and here they are not limited, but that they might if they pleased sanctify the whole) to the service of God. For we ought to give *as God prospers us*, *1 Cor. xvi. 2.* Purchasers are in a special manner bound to be charitable. Now forasmuch as purchased lands were by a former law to return at the year of jubilee to the family from which they were purchased, God would not have that law and the intentions of it defeated, by making the lands Corban, *a gift*, (*Mark vii. 11.*) But it was to be computed how much the land was worth for so many years as were from the vow to the jubilee, for only so long it was his own, and God *hates robbery for burnt-offerings*; and we can never acceptably serve God with that which we have wronged our neighbour of. And so much money he was to give in present, and keep the land in his own hands till the year of jubilee, when it was to return free of all encumbrances, even that of its being dedicated to him of whom it was bought. The value of the shekel by which all these estimations were to be made is here ascertained, *ver. 25.* it shall be twenty gerahs, and every gerah was sixteen barley-corns. This was fixed before, *Exod. xxx. 13.* and whereas there had been some alterations, it is again fixed in the laws of Ezekiel's visionary temple, *Ezek. xlv. 12.* to note that the gospel should reduce things to their ancient standard.

26. ¶ Only the firstling of the beasts, which should be the LORD's firstling, no man shall sanctify it, whether it be ox, or sheep: it is the LORD's. 27. And if it be of an unclean beast, then he shall redeem it according to thine estimation, and shall add a fifth part of it thereto: or if it be not redeemed, then it shall be sold according to thy estimation. 28. Notwithstanding, no devoted thing that a man shall devote unto the LORD, of all that he hath, both of man and beast, and of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed: every devoted thing is most holy unto the LORD. 29. None devoted, which shall be devoted of men, shall be redeemed: but shall surely be put to death. 30. And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's: it is holy unto the LORD. 31. And if a man will at all redeem ought of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth part thereof. 32. And concerning the tithe of the herd or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod: the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD. 33. He shall not search whether it be good or bad, neither shall he change it: and if he change it at all, then both it and the change thereof shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed. 34. These are the commandments which the LORD commanded Moses, for the children of Israel, in mount Sinai.

Here is, 1. A caution given that no man should make such a jest of sanctifying things to the Lord, as to sanctify any firstling

to him, for that was his already by the law, *ver. 26.* Though the matter of a general vow be that which we were before obliged to, as of our sacramental covenant; yet a singular vow should be of that which we were not in such circumstances and proportions antecedently bound to. The law concerning the firstlings of unclean beasts, *ver. 27.* is the same with that before, *ver. 11, 12.* 2. Things or persons devoted are here distinguished from things or persons that were only sanctified. (1.) Devoted things were most holy to the Lord, and could neither revert, nor be alienated, *ver. 28.* They were of the same nature with those sacrifices which were called most holy, which none might touch but only the priests themselves. The difference between these and other sanctified things arose from the different expression of the vow. If a man dedicated any thing to God, binding himself with a solemn curse never to alienate it to any other purpose, then it was a thing devoted. (2.) Devoted persons were to be put to death, *ver. 29.* Not that it was in the power of any parent or master thus to devote a child or servant to death; but it must be meant of the public enemies of Israel, who either by the appointment of God, or the sentence of the congregation, were devoted, as the seven nations with which they must make no league. The city of Jericho in particular was thus devoted, *Josh. vi. 17.* The inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead were put to death for violating the curse pronounced upon those that came not up to Mizpeh, *Judg. xxi. 9, 10.* Some think it was for want of being rightly informed of the true intent and meaning of this law that Jephtha sacrificed his daughter; as one devoted, which might not be redeemed. 3. A law concerning tithes, which were paid for the service of God before the law; as appears by Abraham's payment of them, *Gen. xiv. 19.* and Jacob's promise of them, *Gen. xxviii. 22.* It is here appointed, 1. That they should pay tithe of all their increase, their corn, trees, and cattle, *ver. 30, 32.* Whatsoever products they had the benefit of, God must be honoured with the tithe of, if it were tithable. Thus they acknowledged God to be the owner of their land, the giver of its fruits, and themselves to be his tenants, and dependents upon him: Thus they gave him thanks for the plenty they enjoyed, and supplicated his favour in the continuance of it: And we are taught in general to *honour the Lord with our substance*, *Prov. iii. 9.* and in particular to support and maintain his ministers; and to be *ready to communicate* to them, *Gal. vi. 6.* *1 Cor. ix. 11.* And how this may be done in a fitter and more equal proportion than that of the tenth, which God himself appointed of old, I cannot see. 2. That which was once marked for tithe should not be altered, no not for a better, *ver. 33.* for providence directed the rod that marked them: God would accept it though it were not the best, and they must not grudge it though it were, for it was what passed under the rod. 3. That it should not be redeemed, unless the owner would give a fifth part more for its ransom, *ver. 31.* If men had the curiosity to prefer what was marked for tithe before any other part of their increase, it was fit they should pay for their curiosity.

The last verse seems to have reference to this whole book, which it is the conclusion of; *These are the commandments which the Lord commanded Moses, for the children of Israel.* Many of these commandments are moral, and of perpetual obligation; others of them ceremonial, and peculiar to the Jewish economy, which yet have a spiritual significancy, and are instructive to us, who are furnished with a key to let us into the mysteries contained in them; for unto us by these institutions is the gospel preached as well as unto them, *Heb. iv. 2.* And upon the whole matter we may see cause to bless God that we are not come to mount Sinai, *Heb. xii. 18.* 1. That we are not under the dark shadows of the law, but enjoy the clear light of the gospel, which shews us, *Christ the end of the law for righteousness*, *Rom. x. 4.* The doctrine of our reconciliation to God by a mediator is not clouded with the smoke of burning sacrifices, but cleared by the knowledge of *Christ, and him crucified.* 2. That we are not under the heavy yoke of the law, and the carnal ordinances of it, (as the apostle calls them, *Heb. ix. 10.*) imposed till the time of reformation; a yoke which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear, *Acts xv. 10.* but under the sweet and easy institutions of the gospel, which pronounces those the true worshippers, that worship the Father in spirit and truth, by Christ only, and in his name, who is our priest, temple, altar, sacrifice, purification, and all. Let us not therefore think that because we are not tied to the ceremonial cleanings, feasts, and oblations, a little care, time, and expence, will serve to honour God with: No; but rather have our hearts more enlarged in free-will offerings to his praise, more enflamed with holy love and joy, and more engaged in seriousness of thought, and sincerity of intention; having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, let us draw near with a true heart, and in full assurance of faith, worshipping God with so much the more cheerfulness and humble confidence, still saying, *Blessed be God for Jesus Christ.*

A N E X P O S I T I O N W I T H P R A C T I C A L O B S E R V A T I O N S

Upon the Fourth Book of Moses, called

N U M B E R S.

The titles of the five books of Moses, which we use in our bibles, are all borrowed from the Greek translation of the Seventy, the most ancient version of the Old Testament that we know of: But the title of this book only we turn into English; in all the rest we retain the Greek word it self; for which difference I know no reason, but that the Latin translators have generally done the same. Otherwise this book might as well have been called Arithmoi, the Greek title, as the first Genesis, and the second Exodus; or those might as well have been translated, and called, the first the Generation, or Original, the second the Out-let, or Escape, as this Numbers. — This book was thus entitled, because of the numbers of the children of Israel, so often mentioned in this book, and so well worthy to give a title to it, because it was the remarkable accomplishment of God's promise to Abraham, that his seed should be as the stars of heaven for multitude. It also relates to two numbringings of them, one at mount Sinai, chap. i. The other in the plains of Moab, thirty-nine years after, chap. xxvi. And not three men the same in the last account that were in the first. The book is almost equally divided between histories and laws, intermixed. 1. We have here the histories of the numbering and marshalling of the tribes, chap. i—iv. The dedication of the altar and Levites, chap. vii, viii. Their march, chap. ix, x. Their murmuring and unbelief, for which they were sentenced to wander forty years in the wilderness, chap. xi.—xiv. The rebellion of Corah, chap. xvi, xvii. And the history of the last year of the forty, chap. xx.—xxvi. The conquest of Midian, and the settlement of the two tribes, chap. xxxi, xxxii. With an account of their journies, chap. xxxiii. 2. We have divers laws, about the Nazarites, &c. chap. v, vi. And again, about the priests charge, &c. chap. xviii, xix. Feasts, chap. xxviii, xxix. And vows, chap. xxx. And relating to their settlement in Canaan, chap. xxxvii, xxxiv, xxxv, xxxvi. An abstract of much of this book, we have in a few words, Psalm xcvi. 10. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and an application of it to our selves, Heb. iv. 1. Let us fear, lest we seem to come short. Many considerable nations there were now in being, that dwelt in cities and fortified towns, of which no notice is taken, no account kept, by the sacred history: But very exact records are kept of the affairs of a handful of people, that dwelt in tents, and wandered strangely in a wilderness, because they were the children of the covenant: For the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.

C H A P. I.

Israel was now to be formed into a common-wealth, or a kingdom rather; for the Lord was their king (1 Sam. xii. 12.) their government a theocracy, and Moses under him was king in Jeshurun, Deut. xxxiii. 5. Now for the right settlement of this holy state, next to the institution of good laws, was necessary the institution of good order; an account therefore must be taken of the subjects of this kingdom, which is done in this chapter. Where we have, 1. Orders given to Moses to number the people, ver. 1—4. 2. Persons nominated to assist him herein, ver. 5—16. 3. The particular number of each tribe, as it was given in to Moses, ver. 17—43. 4. The sum total of all together, ver. 44—46. 5. An exception of the Levites, ver. 47—54.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of the congregation, on the first day of the second month, in the second year, after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying, 2. Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of their names, every male by their poll. 3. From twenty years old and upwards all that are able to go forth to war in Israel: thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies. 4. And with you there shall be a man of every tribe: every one head of the house of his fathers. 5. ¶ And these are the names of the men that shall stand with you: Of the tribe of Reuben; Elizur the son of Shedeur. 6. Of Si-

meon; Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. 7. Of Judah: Nahshon the son of Amminadab. 8. Of Issachar; Nathaneel the son of Zuar. 9. Of Zebulun: Eliab the son of Helon. 10. Of the children of Joseph: Of Ephraim: Elishama the son of Ammihud: Of Manasseh: Gammaliel the son of Pedahzur. 11. Of Benjamin: Abidan the son of Gideon. 12. Of Dan: Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. 13. Of Asher: Pagiel the son of Ocran. 14. Of Gad: Eliafaph the son of Deuel. 15. Of Naphtali: Ahira the son of Enan. 16. These were the renowned of the congregation, princes of the tribes of their fathers, heads of thousands in Israel.

Here is a commission issued out for the numbering of the people of Israel; and David, long after, paid dear for doing it without a commission. Here is, 1. The date of this commission, ver. 1. The place; it is given at God's court in the wilderness of Sinai; from his royal palace, the tabernacle of the congregation. The time; in the second year after they came out of Egypt; we may call it the second year of that reign. The laws in Leviticus were given in the first month of that year; these orders were given in the beginning of the second month. 2. The directions given for the execution of it, ver. 2, 3. (1.) None were to be numbred but the males, and those only such as were fit for war. None under twenty years old, for though some such might have bulk and strength enough for military service, yet in compassion to their tender years, God would not have them put upon it to bear arms. (2.) Nor were any to be numbred, that through age or bodily infirmity, blindness, lameness, or chronical diseases, were unfit for war. The church being militant, those only are reput-

ed the true members of it, that have lifted themselves soldiers of Jesus Christ, for our life, our christian life is a warfare. (3.) The account was to be taken *according to their families*, that it might not only be known how many they were, and what were their names, but of what tribe, and family or clan; nay, of what particular house every person was; or, reckoning it the muster of an army, to what regiment every man belonged, that he might know his place himself, and the government might know where to find him. They were numbred a little before this, when their poll-money was paid for the service of the tabernacle, *Exod. xxxviii. 25, 26.* But it should seem they were not then registered by the house of their fathers, as now they were. That number and this is the same, Six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty men, for as many as had died since then, and were lost in the account, so many were arrived to be twenty years old, and were added to the account. Note, As one generation passeth away, another generation cometh. As vacancies are daily made; so recruits are daily raised to fill up the vacancies, and providence takes care that one time or other, in one place or other, the births shall balance the burials, that the race of mankind and the holy seed may not be cut off and extinct. 3. Commissioners are named for the doing of this work. Moses and Aaron were to preside, *ver. 3.* and one man of every tribe, that was renowned in his tribe, and was presumed to know it well, was to assist in it: *The princes of the tribes, ver. 16.* Note, Those that are honourable should study to be serviceable; he that is great, let him be your minister, and shew by his knowing the publick, that he deserves to be publickly known. The charge of this muster was committed to him, who was the lord lieutenant of that tribe.

Now why was this account ordered to be taken and kept? For several reasons. 1. To prove the accomplishment of the promise made to Abraham, that God would multiply his seed exceedingly; and renewed in Jacob, *Gen. xxviii. 14.* that his seed should be as the dust of the earth; now it appears, that there did not fail one tittle of that good promise, which was an encouragement to them to hope, that the other promise of the land of Canaan for an inheritance should also be fulfilled in its season. When the number of a body of men is only guessed at upon the view, it is easy for one that is disposed to cavil, to object that the conjecture is mistaken, and that if they were to be counted, they would not be found half so many; therefore God would have Israel numbred, that it might be upon record, how vastly they were increased in a little time; that the power of God's providence, and the truth of his promise, may be seen and acknowledged by all. It could not have been expected in any ordinary course of nature, that seventy five souls (which was the number of Jacob's family, when he went down into Egypt) should in two hundred and fifteen years (and it was no longer) multiply to so many hundred thousands. It is therefore to be attributed to an extraordinary virtue in the divine promise and blessing. 2. It was to intimate the particular care God himself would take of his Israel, and expected that Moses and the inferior rulers should take of them. God is called the shepherd of Israel, *Psal. lxxx. 1.* now the shepherds always kept count of their flocks, and delivered them by number to their under-shepherds, that they might know if any were missing; in like manner God numbers his flock, that of all he took into his fold he might lose none, but upon a valuable consideration, even those that were sacrificed to his justice. 3. It was to put a difference between the true-born Israelites, and the mixed multitude that were among them; none were numbred but Israelites; all the world is but as lumber in comparison with those jewels. Little account is made of others, but the saints God has a particular property in and concern for: *The Lord knows them that are his, 2 Tim. ii. 19.* knows them by name, *Phil. iv. 3.* The hairs of their head are numbred; but he will say to others, *I never knew you*, never made any account of you. 4. It was in order to their being marshalled into several districts, for the more easy administration of justice, and their more regular march through the wilderness. It is a rout and a rabble, not an army, that is not mustered and put in order.

17. ¶ And Moses and Aaron took these men which are expressed by *their names*. 18. And they assembled all the congregation together on the first day of the second month, and they declared their pedigrees after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of their names, from twenty years old and upward, by their poll. 19. As the LORD commanded Moses, so he numbred them in the wilderness of Sinai. 20. And the children of Reuben, Israel's eldest son, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, by their poll, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: 21. Those that were numbred of them, *even of the tribe of Reuben, were forty and six thousand, and five hundred.* 22. ¶ Of the children of Simeon, by their generations, after their fa-

milies, by the house of their fathers, those that were numbred of them, according to the number of the names, by their polls, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: 23. Those that were numbred of them, *even of the tribe of Simeon, were fifty and nine thousand and three hundred.* 24. ¶ Of the children of Gad, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: 25. Those that were numbred of them, *even of the tribe of Gad, were forty and five thousand six hundred and fifty.* 26. ¶ Of the children of Judah, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: 27. Those that were numbred of them, *even of the tribe of Judah, were threescore and fourteen thousand and six hundred.* 28. ¶ Of the children of Issachar, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: 29. Those that were numbred of them, *even of the tribe of Issachar, were fifty and four thousand and four hundred.* 30. ¶ Of the children of Zebulun, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: 31. Those that were numbred of them, *even of the tribe of Zebulun, were fifty and seven thousand and four hundred.* 32. ¶ Of the children of Joseph, *namely, of the children of Ephraim*, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: 33. Those that were numbred of them, *even of the tribe of Ephraim, were forty thousand and five hundred.* 34. ¶ Of the children of Manasseh, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: 35. Those that were numbred of them, *even of the tribe of Manasseh, were thirty and two thousand and two hundred.* 36. ¶ Of the children of Benjamin, by their generations, after their families, by the house of the fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: 37. Those that were numbred of them, *even of the tribe of Benjamin, were thirty and five thousand and four hundred.* 38. ¶ Of the children of Dan, by their generations after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: 39. Those that were numbred of them, *even of the tribe of Dan, were threescore and two thousand and seven hundred.* 40. ¶ Of the children of Asher, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: 41. Those that were numbred of them, *even of the tribe of Asher, were forty and one thousand and five hundred.* 42. ¶ Of the children of Naphtali, throughout their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: 43. Those that were numbred of them, *even of the tribe of Naphtali, were fifty and three thousand and four hundred.*

We have here the speedy execution of the orders given for the numbering of the people. It was begun the same day that the orders were given, *The first day of the second month*, compare *ver. 18.* with *ver. 1.* Note, When any work is to be done for God, it is good to set about it quickly, while the sense of duty is strong and pressing. And for ought appears, it was but one day's work, for many other things were done between, and the twentieth day of this month, when they removed their camp, *chap. x. 11.* Joab was almost ten months numbering the people in David's time, *2 Sam. xxiv. 8.* but then they were dispersed, now they live close together; then Satan moved the doing of it, now God did. It was the sooner and the easier done now, because it had been done

done but a while ago, and they needed but review the old Books, with the alterations since made, which probably they had kept an account of as they occurred.

In the particulars here left upon record, we may observe, 1. That the numbers are registred in words at length (as I may say) and not in figures; to every one of the twelve tribes it is repeated, for the greater ceremony and solemnity of the account, that they were numbred by *their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of their names*; to shew, that every tribe took, and gave in the account by the same rule, and in the same method, though so many hands were employed in it; setting down their genealogy first, to shew that their family descended from Israel, then the families themselves in their order, then dividing each family into the houses, or subordinate families that branched from it, and under these the names of the particular persons, according to the rules of heraldry. Thus every man might know who were his relations, or next of kin, on which some laws we have already met with did depend; besides that the nearer any are to us in relation, the more ready we should be to do them good. 2. That they all end with hundreds, only Gad with fifty, *ver. 25.* but none of the numbers descend to units or tens. Some think it was a special providence, that ordered all the tribes just at this time to be even numbers, and no odd or broken numbers among them, to shew them that there was something more than ordinary designed in their increase, there being this uncommon in the circumstance of it. It is rather probable, that Moses having some time before appointed rulers of hundreds, and rulers of fifties, *Exod. xviii. 25.* they numbred the people by their respective rulers, which would bring the number to even hundreds or fifties. 3. That Judah is the most numerous of them all; more than double to Benjamin and Manasseh, and almost twelve thousand more than any other tribe, *ver. 27.* It was Judah whom *his brethren must praise*, because from him Messiah the prince was to descend, but because that was a thing at a distance, God did many ways honour that tribe in the mean time, particularly by the great increase of it, for his sake who was to spring out of Judah, *Heb. vii. 14.* in the fulness of time. Judah was to lead the van through the wilderness, and therefore was furnished accordingly with greater strength than any other tribe. 4. Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph, are numbred as distinct tribes, and both together made up almost as many as Judah; this was in pursuance of Jacob's adoption of them, by which they were equall'd with their uncles Reuben and Simeon, *Gen. xlviii. 5.* And the effect of the blessing of Joseph, who was to be a *fruitful bough*, *Gen. xlix. 22.* And Ephraim the younger is put first, and is more numerous than Manasseh, for Jacob had crossed hands, and foreseen ten thousands of Ephraim, and thousands of Manasses. The fulfilling of this confirms our faith in the spirit of prophecy; with which the patriarchs were endued. 5. When they came down into Egypt, Dan had but one son, *Gen. xlv. 23.* and so his tribe was but one family, *Numb. xxvi. 42.* Benjamin had then ten sons, *Gen. xlv. 21.* yet now the tribe of Dan is almost double in number to that of Benjamin. Note, The increasing and diminishing of families doth not always go by probabilities. Some are multiplied greatly, and again are minished, while others that were poor have families made them like a flock, *Psal. cvii. 38, 39, 41.* and see *Job xii. 23.* 6. It is said of each of the tribes, that those were numbred who were able to go forth to war, to mind them that they had wars before them, tho' now they were in peace, and met with no opposition. *Let not him that girdeth on the harness boast, as tho' he had put it off.*

44. These are those that were numbred, which Moses and Aaron numbred, and the princes of Israel, *being* twelve men: each one was for the house of his fathers. 45. So were all those that were numbred of the children of Israel, by the house of their fathers, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to the war in Israel: 46. Even all they that were numbred, were six hundred thousand and three thousand, and five hundred and fifty.

We have here the sum total at the foot of the account; they were in all six hundred thousand fighting men, and three thousand five hundred and fifty over. Some think, that when this was their number some months before, *Exod. xxxviii. 26.* the Levites were reckoned with them; but now that tribe was separated for the service of God, yet so many more were by this time attained to the age of twenty years, as that still they were the same number; to shew that whatever we part with for the honour and service of God, it shall certainly be made up to us one way or other.

Now we see what a vast body of men they were. Let us consider, 1. How much went to maintain all these (besides twice as many more, no question, of women and children, sick and aged, and the mixed multitude) for forty years together in the wilderness, and they were all at God's finding every day, having their food from the dew of heaven, and not from the fatness of the earth. O what a great and good housekeeper is our God, that

hath such numbers depending on him, and receiving from him every day! 2. What work sin makes with a people; within forty years most of them would indeed have died of course for the common sin of mankind, for when sin entred into the world, death came with it, and how great are the desolations which it makes in the earth! But for the particular sin of unbelief and murmuring, all those that were now numbred, except two, laid their bones under their iniquity, and perished in the wilderness. 3. What a great multitude God's spiritual Israel will amount to at last; though at one time, and in one place, they seem to be but a little flock, yet when they come all together they shall be a great multitude, innumerable, *Revel. vii. 9.* And though the church's beginning be small, its latter end shall greatly increase. A little one shall become a thousand.

47. ¶ But the Levites, after the tribe of their fathers, were not numbred among them. 48. For the LORD had spoken unto Moses, saying, 49. Only thou shalt not number the tribe of Levi, neither take the sum of them among the children of Israel: 50. But thou shalt appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of testimony, and over all the vessels thereof, and over all things that belong to it: they shall bear the tabernacle, and all the vessels thereof, and they shall minister unto it, and shall encamp round about the tabernacle. 51. And when the tabernacle setteth forward, the Levites shall take it down: and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up: and the stranger that cometh nigh, shall be put to death. 52. And the children of Israel shall pitch their tents every man by his own camp, and every man by his own standard, throughout their hosts. 53. But the Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony; that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel: and the Levites shall keep the charge of the tabernacle of testimony. 54. And the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did they.

Care is here taken to distinguish the tribe of Levi from the rest of the tribes, which in the matter of the golden calf had distinguished it self, *Exod. xxxii. 26.* Note, Singular services shall be recompensed with singular honours. Now, 1. It was the honour of the Levites that they were made guardians of the spiritualities; to them was committed the care of the tabernacle, and the treasures thereof, both in their camps and in their marches. (1.) When they moved, the Levites were to take down the tabernacle, to carry it and all that belonged to it, and then to set it up again in the place appointed, *ver. 50, 51.* It was for the honour of the holy things, that none should be permitted to see them, or touch them, but those only who were called of God to the service. Thus we all are unfit and unworthy to have fellowship with God, till first we are called by his grace *into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord*; and so being the spiritual seed of that great high priest, are made *priests to our God*; and it is promised, that God would take Levites to himself, even from the Gentiles, *Isa. lxvi. 21.* (2.) When they rested, the Levites were to *encamp round about the tabernacle*, *ver. 50, 53.* that they might be near their work, and residents upon their charge, always ready to attend; and that they might be a guard upon the tabernacle, to preserve it from being either plundered or profaned. They must pitch round about the tabernacle, *That there be no wrath upon the congregation*, as there would be, if the tabernacle and the charge of it were neglected, or those crowded upon it, that were not allowed to come near. Note, Great care must be taken to prevent sin, because the preventing of sin is the preventing of wrath. 2. It was their further honour, that as Israel being a holy people was not *reckoned among the nations*, so they being a holy tribe were not reckoned among other Israelites, but numbred afterwards by themselves, *ver. 49.* The service which the Levites were to do about the sanctuary, is called a *warfare*, *Numb. iv. 23.* And being engaged in that warfare, they were discharged from military services, and therefore not numbred with those that were to *go out to war*. Note, They that minister about holy things should neither entangle themselves, nor be entangled in secular affairs. The ministry is it self work enough for a whole man, and all little enough to be employed in it. It is an admonition to ministers, to distinguish themselves by their exemplary conversations from common Israelites, not affecting to seem greater, but aiming to be really better, every way better than others.

C H A P. II.

The thousands of Israel having been mustered in the former chapter, in this are marshalled, and a regular disposition made of their camp, by a divine appointment. Here is, 1. A general order concerning it, *ver. 1, 2.* 2. Particular directions for the posting of each of the tribes, in four distinct squadrons, three tribes

tribes in each squadron. (1.) In the vanguard, on the east, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun were posted, ver. 3—9. (2.) In the right wing, southward, Reuben, Simeon, and Gad, ver. 10—16. (3.) In the rear, westward, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin, ver. 18—24. (4.) In the left wing, northward, Dan, Asher, and Naphtali, ver. 25—31. (5.) The tabernacle in the centre, ver. 17. And lastly, The conclusion of this appointment, ver. 32—34.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron, saying, 2 Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their fathers house: far off, about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch.

Here is the general appointment given both for their orderly encampment where they rested, and their orderly march when they moved. Some order it is likely they had observed hitherto; they came out of Egypt in rank and file, *Exod. xiii. 18.* but now they were put into a better model. 1. They all dwelt in tents, and when they marched, carried all their tents along with them, for they found no city to dwell in, *Psal. cvii. 4.* This represents to us our state in this world, it is a moveable state, we are here to day, and gone to morrow, and it is a military state: Is not our life a warfare? We do but pitch our tents in this world, and have in it no continuing city. Let us therefore while we are pitching in this world, be pressing through it. 2. Those of a tribe were to pitch together, *every man his own standard.* Note, It is the will of God that mutual love and affection, converse and communion should be kept up among relations. Those that are of kin to each other, should, as much as they can, be acquainted with each other; and the bonds of nature should be improved for the strengthening of the bonds of christian communion. 3. Every one must know his place, and keep in it; they were not allowed to fix where they pleased, nor to remove when they pleased, but God quarters them, with a charge to abide in their quarters. Note, It is God that appoints us the bounds of our habitation, and to him we must refer our selves, *He shall chuse our inheritance for us, Psal. xlvii. 4.* and in his choice we must acquiesce, and not love to flit, nor be as the bird that wanders from her nest. 4. Every tribe had its standard, flag, or ensign, and it should seem every family had some particular ensign of their father's house, which were carried, as with us the colours of each troop or company in a regiment are. These were of use for the distinction of tribes and families, and the gathering and keeping of them together, in allusion to which the preaching of the gospel is said to lift up an ensign, to which the Gentiles shall seek, and by which they shall pitch, *Isa. xi. 10, 12.* Note, God is the God of order, and not of confusion. These standards made this mighty army seem more beautiful to its friends, and more formidable to its enemies. The church of Christ is said to be as terrible as an army with banners, *Cant. vi. 10.* It is uncertain how these standards were distinguished: some conjecture that the standard of each tribe was of the same colour with the precious stone, in which the name of that tribe was written in the high priest's ephod, and that that was all the difference. Many of the modern Jews think there was some coat of arms painted in each standard, which had reference to the blessing of that tribe by Jacob. Judah bore a lion, Dan a serpent, Naphtali a hind, Benjamin a wolf, &c. Some of them say, the four principal standards were Judah a lion, Reuben a man, Joseph an ox, and Dan an eagle; making the appearances in Ezekiel's vision to allude to it. Others say, the name of each tribe was written in its standard; whatever it was, no doubt it gave a certain direction. 5. They were to pitch about the tabernacle, which was to be in the midst of them, as the tent or pavilion of a general in the centre of an army. They must encamp round the tabernacle, (1.) That it might be equally a comfort and joy to them all, as it was a token of God's gracious presence with them, *Psal. xlv. 5. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved.* Their camp had reason to be hearty, when thus they had God in the heart of them; to have bread from heaven every day round about their camp, and fire from heaven, with other tokens of God's favour in the midst of their camp were abundantly sufficient to answer that question, *Is the Lord among us, or is he not? Happy art thou O Israel!* It is probable, the doors of all their tents were made to look towards the tabernacle from all sides; for every Israelite should have his eyes always towards the Lord; therefore they worshipped at the tent door. The tabernacle was in the midst of the camp, that it might be near to them; for it is a very desirable thing to have the solemn administrations of holy ordinances near us, and within our reach. *The kingdom of God is among you.* (2.) That they might be a guard and defence upon the tabernacle and the Levites on every side. No invader could come near God's tabernacle, but he must first penetrate the thickest of their squadrons. Note, If God undertake the protection of our comforts, we ought in our places to undertake the protection of his institutions, and stand up in defence of his honour and interest, and ministers. 6. Yet they were to pitch afar off, in reverence to the sanctuary, that it might not seem crowd-

ed, and thrust up among them; and that the common business of the camp might be no annoyance to it. They were also taught to keep their distance, lest too much familiarity should breed contempt. It is supposed from *Joshua iii. 5.* that the difference between the nearest part of the camp and the tabernacle, (or perhaps between them and the camp of Levites, who pitched near the tabernacle) was two thousand cubits, that is, a thousand yards, little more than half a measured mile with us; but the outer parts of the camp must needs be much farther off. Some compute that the extent of their camp could be no less than twelve miles square; for it was like a moveable city, with streets and lanes, in which perhaps the manna fell, as well as on the outside of the camp, that they might have it at their doors. In the christian church we read of a throne, (as in the tabernacle there was a mercy-seat, which is called a *glorious high throne from the beginning, Jer. xvii. 12.* And that throne surrounded by spiritual Israelites, twenty-four elders, double to the number of the tribes, *clothed in white raiment, Rev. iv. 4.* and the banner over them is *Love*; but we are not ordered, as they were, to pitch afar off, no, we are invited to draw near, and come boldly. The saints of the most High are said to be *round about him, Psal. lxxvi. 12.* God by his grace keep us close to him.

3. ¶ And on the east side toward the rising of the sun, shall they of the standard of the camp of Judah pitch, throughout their armies: and Nahshon the son of Amminadab shall be captain of the children of Judah. 4. And his host, and those that were numbred of them, were threescore and fourteen thousand and six hundred. 5. And those that do pitch next unto him, shall be the tribe of Issachar: and Nethaneel the son of Zuar shall be captain of the children of Issachar. 6. And his host, and those that were numbred thereof, were fifty and four thousand and four hundred. 7. Then the tribe of Zebulun: and Eliab the son of Helon shall be captain of the children of Zebulun. 8. And his host, and those that were numbred thereof, were fifty and seven thousand and four hundred. 9. All that were numbred in the camp of Judah, were an hundred thousand, and fourscore thousand, and six thousand and four hundred; throughout their armies: These shall first set forth. 10. ¶ On the south side shall be the standard of the camp of Reuben, according to their armies: and the captain of the children of Reuben shall be Elizur the son of She-deur. 11. And his host, and those that were numbred thereof, were forty and six thousand and five hundred. 12. And those which pitch by him, shall be the tribe of Simeon, and the captain of the children of Simeon shall be Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. 13. And his host, and those that were numbred of them, were fifty and nine thousand and three hundred. 14. Then the tribe of Gad: and the captain of the sons of Gad shall be Eli-afaph the son of Reuel. 15. And his host, and those that were numbred of them, were forty and five thousand and six hundred and fifty. 16. All that were numbred in the camp of Reuben, were an hundred thousand, and fifty and one thousand and four hundred and fifty, throughout their armies: and they shall set forth in the second rank. 17. ¶ Then the tabernacle of the congregation shall set forward with the camp of the Levites, in the midst of the camp: as they shall encamp, so shall they set forward, every man in his place by their standards. 18. ¶ On the west side shall be the standard of the camp of Ephraim, according to their armies: and the captain of the sons of Ephraim, shall be Elishama the son of Ammihud. 19. And his host, and those that were numbred of them, were forty thousand and five hundred. 20. And by him shall be the tribe of Manasseh: and the captain of the children of Manasseh, shall be Gemaliel the son of Pedahzur. 21. And his host, and those that were numbred of them, were thirty and two thousand and two hundred. 22. Then the tribe of Benjamin: and the captain of the sons of Benjamin, shall be Abidan the son of Gideon. 23. And his host, and those that were numbred of them, were thirty and five thousand and four hundred. 24. All that were numbred of the camp of Ephraim, were an hundred thousand, and eight thousand and an hundred, throughout their armies: and they shall go forward in the third rank. 25. ¶ The standard of the camp of Dan shall be on the north side by their armies: and the captain of the children of Dan shall be Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. 26. And his host,

and those that were numbred of them, *were* threescore and two thousand and seven hundred. 27. And those that encamp by him, *shall be* the tribe of Asher: and the captain of the children of Asher, *shall be* Pagiel the son of Ocran. 28. And his host, and those that were numbred of them, *were* forty and one thousand and five hundred. 29. ¶ Then the tribe of Naphtali: and the captain of the children of Naphtali, *shall be* Ahira the son of Enan. 30. And his host, and those that were numbred of them, *were* fifty and three thousand and four hundred. 31. All they that were numbred in the camp of Dan, *were* an hundred thousand, and fifty and seven thousand and six hundred: they shall go hindmost with their standards. 32. These *are* those which were numbred of the children of Israel, by the house of their fathers, all those that were numbred of the camps throughout their hosts, *were* six hundred thousand, and three thousand and five hundred and fifty. 33. But the Levites were not numbred among the children of Israel; as the LORD commanded Moses. 34. And the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses: so they pitched by their standards, and so they set forward, every one after their families, according to the house of their fathers.

We have here the particular distribution of the twelve tribes into four squadrons, three tribes in a squadron, one of which was to lead the other two.

Observe, 1. God himself appointed them their place, to prevent strife and envy among them. Had they been left to determine precedence among themselves, they would have been in danger of quarrelling with one another, as the disciples, who strove which should be greatest, each would have had a pretence to be first, or at least not to be last. Had it been left to Moses to determine, they would have quarrelled with him, and charged him with partiality; therefore God doth it, who is himself the fountain and judge of honour, and in his appointment all must acquiesce. If God in his providence advance others above us, and abase us, we ought to be as well satisfied in his doing it that way, as if he did it, as this was done here, by a voice out of the tabernacle; and this consideration, that it appears to be the will of God it should be so, should effectually silence all envies and discontents. And as far as our place comes to be our choice, our Saviour has given us a rule, *Luke xiv. 8. Sit not down in the highest room; and another, Matt. xx. 27. He that will be chief, let him be your servant.* Those that are most humble and most serviceable, are really most honourable. 2. Every tribe had a captain, a prince, or commander in chief, whom God himself nominated, the same that had been appointed to number them, *chap. i. 5.* Our being all the children of one Adam, is so far from justifying the levellers, and taking away the distinctions of place and honour, that even among the children of the same Abraham, the same Jacob, the same Judah, God himself appointed that one should be captain of all the rest. There are powers ordained of God, and those to whom honour and fear is due, and must be paid. Some observe the significancy of the names of these princes, at least in general how much God was in the thoughts of those that gave them their names, for most of them have El, God; at one end or other of their name. Nethaneel, the gift of God; Eliab, my God a Father; Elizur, my God a rock; Shelumiel, God my peace; Eliasaph, God has added; Elishama, my God hath heard; Gamaliel, God my reward; Pagiel, God has met me. By which it appears, that the Israelites in Egypt did not quite forget the name of their God, but when they wanted other memorials, preserv'd the remembrance of it in the names of their children, and therewith comforted themselves in their affliction. 3. Those tribes were placed together under the same standard that were nearest of kin to each other; Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun, were the three youngest sons of Leah, and they were put together; and Issachar and Zebulun would not grudge to be under Judah, since they were his younger brethren; Reuben and Simeon would not have been content in their place. Therefore Reuben Jacob's eldest son is made chief of the next squadron, Simeon no doubt is willing to be under him, and Gad the son of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid, is fitly added to them in Levi's room: Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin are all and only the posterity of Rachel. Dan, the eldest son of Bilhah, is made a leading tribe, though the son of a concubine, that more abundant honour might be bestowed on that which lacked; and it was said that Dan shall judge his people, and to him were added the two younger sons of the handmaids. Thus unexceptionable was the order in which they were placed. 4. The tribe of Judah was in the first post of honour, encamped towards the rising of the sun, and in their marches led the van, not only because it was the most numerous tribe, but chiefly because from that tribe Christ was to come, who is the *lion of the tribe of Judah*, and was to descend from the loins of him who was now nominated chief cap-

tain of that tribe. Nahshon is reckoned among the ancestors of Christ, *Matt. i.* So that when he went before them, Christ himself went before them in effect, as their Leader. Judah was the first of the twelve sons of Jacob that was blessed; Reuben, Simeon, and Levi were censured by their dying father: he therefore being first in blessing, though not in birth, is put first, to teach children how to value the smiles of their godly parents, and dread their frowns. 5. The tribe of Levi pitched close about the tabernacle, within the rest of their tribes, *ver. 17.* They must defend the sanctuary, and then the rest of the tribes must defend them. Thus in the vision John saw of the glory of heaven, between the elders and the throne were four *living creatures full of eyes*, *Rev. iv. 6, 10.* Civil powers should protect the religious interests of a nation, and be a defence upon that glory.

6. The camp of Dan, (and so that tribe is called long after their settlement in Canaan, *Judg. xiii. 25.* because celebrated for their military prowess) though posted in the left wing when they encamped, was ordered in their march to bring up the reere, *ver. 31.* They were the most numerous next to Judah, and therefore were ordered into a post, which next to the front required most strength, for as the strength is, so shall the day be. Lastly, The children of Israel observed the orders given them, and did *as the Lord commanded Moses*, *ver. 34.* They put themselves in the posts assigned them, without murmuring or disputing, and as it was their safety, so it was their beauty; Balaam was charmed with the sight of it, *Numb. xxiv. 5. How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob?* Thus the gospel church, called the camp of saints, ought to be compact together according to the scripture model, every one knowing and keeping his place, and then all that wish well to the church rejoice, *beholding their order*, *Col. ii. 5.*

CHAP. III.

This chapter and the next are concerning the tribe of Levi, which was to be mustered and marshalled by it self, and not in common with the other tribes; which signified the particular honour put upon them, and the particular duty and service required from them. The Levites are in this chapter considered, 1. As attendants on, and assistants to, the priests in the temple-service. And so we have an account, (1.) Of the priests themselves, ver. 1—4. and their work, ver. 10. (2.) Of the gift of the Levites to them, ver. 5—9. in order to which they are mustered, ver. 14—16. and the sum of them taken, ver. 39. Each particular family of them is mustered, has its place assigned, and its charge. The Gershonites, ver. 18—26. The Kohathites, ver. 27—32. The Merarites, ver. 33—39. 2. As equivalents for the first-born, ver. 11—13. (1.) The first-born were numbred, and the Levites taken instead of them, as far as the number of the Levites went, ver. 40—45. (2.) What first-born there were more than the Levites were redeemed, ver. 46—51.

1. **T**H E S E also are the generations of Aaron and Moses, in the day that the LORD spake with Moses in mount Sinai. 2. And these are the names of the sons of Aaron; Nadab the first-born, and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 3. These *are* the names of the sons of Aaron, the priests which were anointed, whom he consecrated to minister in the priests office. 4. And Nadab and Abihu died before the LORD, when they offered strange fire before the LORD, in the wilderness of Sinai, and they had no children: and Eleazar and Ithamar ministered in the priests office, in the sight of Aaron their father. 5. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 6. Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him. 7. And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation, before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle. 8. And they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle. 9. And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron, and to his sons: they *are* wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel. 10. And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priests office: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death. 11. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 12. And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel, instead of all the first-born that opened the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be mine. 13. Because all the first-born *are* mine: for on the day that I smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, I hallowed unto me all the first-born in Israel, both man and beast, mine they shall be: I *am* the LORD.

Here,

Here, 1. The family of Aaron is confirmed in the priest's office, *ver. 10.* They had been called to it before, and consecrated; here they are appointed to *wait on their priest's office*: the apostle useth this phrase, *Rom. xii. 7. Let us wait on our ministry.* The work and office of the ministry requires a constant attendance, and great diligence; so frequent are the returns of its work, and yet so transient its favourable opportunities, that it must be waited on. Here is repeated what was said before, *chap. i. 51. The stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death*; which forbids the invading of the priests office by any other person whatsoever, none must come nigh to minister but Aaron and his sons only, all others are strangers. It also lays a charge upon the priests as doorkeepers in God's house, to take care that none should come near who were forbidden by the law; they must keep off all intruders, whose approach would be to the profanation of the holy things, telling them that if they came near it was at their peril, they would *die by the hand of God*, as Uzzah did. The Jews say, that afterwards there was hung over the door of the temple a golden sword, (perhaps alluding to that flaming sword at the entrance of the garden of Eden) on which was engraven, *The stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.* 2. A particular account is given of this family of Aaron, what we have met with before concerning them is here repeated. (1.) The consecration of all the sons of Aaron, *ver. 3.* They were all anointed to minister before the Lord, though it appeared afterwards, and God knew it, that two of them were wise, and two were foolish. (2.) The fall of the two eldest, *ver. 4.* they offered strange fire, and died for so doing before the Lord. This is mentioned here in the preamble to the law concerning the priesthood, for warning to all succeeding priests; let them know by this example that God is a jealous God, and will not be mocked; the holy anointing oil was an honour to the obedient, but not a shelter to the disobedient. It is here said, *they had no children*, providence so ordering it, for their greater punishment, that none of their descendents should remain to be priests, and so to bear up their name, who had profaned God's name. (3.) The continuance of the two younger, Eleazar and Ithamar ministered in the sight of Aaron. It intimates, 1. The care they took about their ministrations, not to make any blunders; they kept under their father's eye, and took instruction from him in all they did, because probably Nadab and Abihu got out of their father's sight when they offered strange fire. Note, It is good for young people to act under the conduct and inspection of those that are aged and experienced. 2. The comfort Aaron took in it, it pleased him to see his younger sons behave themselves prudently and gravely, when his two elder had miscarried. Note, It is a great satisfaction to parents, to see their children walk in the truth, 3 Joh. 4. 3. A grant is made of the Levites to be assistants to the priests in their work. Give the Levites to Aaron, *ver. 9.* Aaron was to have a greater propriety in, and power over, the tribe of Levi, than any other of the princes had in and over their respective tribes. There was a great deal of work belonging to the priest's office, and there was now only three pair of hands to do it all, Aaron's, and his two sons, for it doth not appear that they had either of them any children at this time, at least not any that were of age to minister, therefore God appoints the Levites to attend upon them. Note, Those whom God finds work for, he will find help for.

Here is, (1.) The service for which the Levites were designed, they were to minister to the priests, in their ministrations to the Lord, *ver. 6.* and to keep Aaron's charge, *ver. 7.* as the deacons to the bishops in the evangelical constitutions, serving at tables while they waited on their ministry. The Levites killed the sacrifices, and then the priests needed only to sprinkle the blood and burn the fat: the Levites prepared the incense; the priests burnt it, 1 Chron. ix. 26. They were to keep not only Aaron's charge, but the charge of the whole congregation. Note, It is a great trust that is reposed in ministers, not only for the glory of Christ, but for the good of his church; so that they must not only keep the charge of the great high-priest, but must also be faithful to the souls of men, in trust for whom a dispensation is committed to them. (2.) The consideration upon which the Levites were demanded, they were taken instead of the first-born. The preservation of the first-born of Israel, when all the first-born of the Egyptians (with whom there were many of them mingled) were destroyed, was looked upon by him who never makes any unreasonable demands, as cause sufficient for the appropriating of all the first-born from thence forward to himself, *ver. 13. All the first-born are mine.* That was sufficient to make them his, though he had given no reason for it, for he is the sole fountain and Lord of all beings and powers; but because all obedience must flow from love, and acts of duty must be acts of gratitude, before they were challenged into peculiar services, they were crowned with peculiar favours. Note, When he that made us saves us, we are thereby laid under further obligations to serve him and live to him. God's right to us by redemption corroborates the right he has to us by creation.

Now because the first-born of a family are generally the favourites, and some would think it a disparagement to have their eldest sons servants to the priests, and attending before the door of the tabernacle, God took the tribe of Levi entire for his own, in lieu

of the first-born, *ver. 12.* Note, God's institutions put no hardships upon men in any of their just interests, or reasonable affections. It was presumed the Israelites would rather part with the Levites than with the first-born, and therefore God graciously ordered the exchange; yet for us he spared not his own son.

14. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, saying, 15. Number the children of Levi, after the house of their fathers, by their families: every male from a month old and upward, shalt thou number them. 16. And Moses numbered them according to the word of the LORD, as he was commanded. 17. And these were the sons of Levi, by their names: Gershon; and Kohath, and Merari. 18. And these are the names of the sons of Gershon, by their families: Libni, and Shimei. 19. And the sons of Kohath by their families: Amram, and Izehar, Hebron, and Uzziel. 20. And the sons of Merari by their families: Mahli, and Mushi: these are the families of the Levites, according to the house of their fathers. 21. Of Gershon was the family of the Libnites, and the family of the Shimites: these are the families of the Gershonites. 22. Those that were numbered of them according to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, even those that were numbered of them, were seven thousand and five hundred. 23. The families of the Gershonites shall pitch behind the tabernacle westward. 24. And the chief of the house of the father of the Gershonites, shall be Eliasaph the son of Lael. 25. And the charge of the sons of Gershon, in the tabernacle of the congregation, shall be the tabernacle, and the tent, the covering thereof, and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: 26. And the hangings of the court, and the curtain for the door of the court, which is by the tabernacle, and by the altar round about, and the cords of it, for all the service thereof. 27. ¶ And of Kohath was the family of the Amramites, and the family of the Izeharites, and the family of the Hebronites, and the family of the Uzzielites: these are the families of the Kohathites. 28. In the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, were eight thousand and six hundred, keeping the charge of the sanctuary. 29. The families of the sons of Kohath shall pitch on the side of the tabernacle southward. 30. And the chief of the house of the father of the families of the Kohathites, shall be Elizaphan the son of Uzziel. 31. And their charge shall be the ark, and the table, and the candlestick, and the altars, and the vessels of the sanctuary, wherewith they minister, and the hanging, and all the service thereof. 32. And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, shall be chief over the chief of the Levites, and have the oversight of them that keep the charge of the sanctuary. 33. ¶ Of Merari was the family of the Mahlites, and the family of the Mushites: these are the families of Merari. 34. And those that were numbered of them, according to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, were six thousand and two hundred. 35. And the chief of the house of the father of the families of Merari, was Zuriel the son of Abihail: these shall pitch on the side of the tabernacle northwards. 36. And under the custody and charge of the sons of Merari shall be the boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and the sockets thereof, and all the vessels thereof, and all that serveth thereto: 37. And the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords. 38. ¶ But those that encamp before the tabernacle toward the east, even before the tabernacle of the congregation eastward, shall be Moses and Aaron, and his sons, keeping the charge of the sanctuary, for the charge of the children of Israel: and the stranger that cometh nigh, shall be put to death. 39. All that were numbered of the Levites, which Moses and Aaron numbered at the commandment of the LORD, throughout their families, all the males, from a month old and upward, were twenty and two thousand.

The Levites being granted to Aaron to minister to him, they are here delivered him by tale, that he might know what he had, and employ them accordingly.

Observe, 1. By what rule they were numbered; Every male from a month old and upward, *ver. 15.* The rest of the tribes were numbered only from twenty years old and upwards, and of them

them those only that were *able to go forth to war*; but into the number of the Levites they must take in both infants and infirm; being exempted from the war, it was not insisted upon that they should be of age and strength for the wars. Though it appears afterwards that little more than a third part of the Levites were fit to be employed in the service of the tabernacle (about eight thousand out of twenty-two) *chap. iv. 47, 48*. Yet God would have them all numbred as retainers to his family; that none may think themselves disowned and rejected of God, because they are not in a capacity of doing him that service which they see others do him. The Levites of a month old could not honour God and serve the tabernacle, as those that were grown up; yet out of the mouth of these babes and sucklings, the Levites praise was perfected. Let not little children be hindered from being enrolled among the disciples of Christ, for such was the tribe of Levi, of such is the kingdom of heaven, that kingdom of priests. The redemption of the first-born was reckoned from a month old, *Numb. xvi. 15, 16*. Therefore from that age the Levites were numbred. They were numbred *after the house of their fathers*, not their mothers; for if the daughter of a Levite married one of another tribe, her son was not a Levite; but we read of a spiritual priest to our God who inherited the unfeigned faith which dwelt in his mother and grand-mother, *2 Tim. i. 5*. 2. How they were distributed into three classes, according to the number of the sons of Levi, Gershon, Kohath, and Merari, and these subdivided into several families, *ver. 17*, to the 20. Concerning each of these three classes, we have an account, 1. Of their number. The Gershonites were seven thousand five hundred. The Kohathites were eight thousand six hundred. The Merarites were six thousand two hundred. The rest of the tribes had not their subordinate families numbred by themselves as those of Levi; this honour God put upon his own tribe. 2. Of their post about the tabernacle on which they were to attend. The Gershonites pitched behind the tabernacle westward, *ver. 23*. The Kohathites on the right hand, southward, *ver. 29*. The Merarites on the left hand, northward, *ver. 35*. And to compleat the square, Moses and Aaron, with the priests, encamped in the front eastward, *ver. 36*. Thus was the tabernacle surrounded with its guards; and thus doth the *angel of the Lord encamp round about them that fear him*, those living temples, *Psal. xxxiv. 7*. Every one knew his place, and must therein abide with God. 3. Of their chief or head. As each class had its own place, so each had its own prince. The commander of the Gershonites, was Eliafaph, *ver. 24*. Of the Kohathites, Elizaphan, *ver. 30*. Of whom we read, *Lev. x. 4*. that he was one of the bearers at the funeral of Nadab and Abihu. Of the Merarites, Zuriel, *ver. 35*. 4. Of their charge, when the camp moved. Each class knew their own business; it was requisite they should; for that which is every body's work, often proves no body's work. The Gershonites were charged with the custody and carriage of all the curtains and hangings, and coverings of the tabernacle and court, *ver. 25, 26*. The Kohathites of all the furniture of the tabernacle; the ark, altar, table, &c. *ver. 31, 32*. The Merarites of the heavy carriage, boards, bars, pillars, &c. *ver. 36, 37*. Here we may observe, (1.) That the Kohathites though they were the second house, yet were preferred before the elder family of the Gershonites. Besides, that Aaron and the priests were of that family, they were more numerous, and their post and charge more honourable, which probably was ordered to put an honour upon Moses who was of that family. Yet, (2.) The posterity of Moses were not at all dignified or privileged, but stood upon the level with other Levites, that it might appear he did not seek the advancement of his own family, nor to entail any honours upon it either in church or state; he that had honour enough himself coveted not to have his name shine by that borrowed light, but rather to have the Levites borrow honour from his name. Let none think contemptibly of the Levites though inferior to the priests, for Moses himself thought it preferment enough for his sons to be Levites. Probably, it was because the family of Moses were Levites only, that in the title of this chapter, which is concerning that tribe, (*ver. 1.*) Aaron is put before Moses. (3.) The sum total of the numbers of this tribe. They are computed in all twenty-two thousand, *ver. 39*. The sums of the particular families amount to three hundred more; which if it had been added to the sum total, the Levites instead of being two hundred seventy three, fewer than the first-born, as they were, *ver. 43*. would have been twenty-seven more, and so the balance would have fallen the other way; but it is supposed, that the three hundred which was struck off from the account when the exchange was to be made, were the first-born of the Levites themselves, born since their coming out of Egypt; which could not be put into the exchange because they were already sanctified to God. But that which is especially observable here is, that the tribe of Levi was by much the least of all the tribes. Note, God's part in the world is too often the smallest part. His chosen are but a little flock in comparison.

40. ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Number all the first-born of the males of the children of Israel, from a month old and upward, and take the number of their names. 41. And thou shalt take the Levites for

me (I am the LORD) instead of all the first-born among the children of Israel; and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstlings among the cattle of the children of Israel. 42. And Moses numbred as the LORD commanded him, all the first-born among the children of Israel. 43. And all the first-born males, by the number of names, from a month old and upward, of those that were numbred of them, were twenty and two thousand two hundred and threescore and thirteen. 44. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 45. Take the Levites instead of all the first-born among the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle, and the Levites shall be mine: I am the LORD. 46. And for those that are to be redeemed of the two hundred and threescore and thirteen, of the first-born of the children of Israel, which are more than the Levites; 47. Thou shalt even take five shekels apiece by the poll, after the shekel of the sanctuary shalt thou take them: the shekel is twenty gerahs. 48. And thou shalt give the money wherewith the odd number of them is to be redeemed, unto Aaron and to his sons. 49. And Moses took the redemption money of them that were over and above them that were redeemed by the Levites. 50. Of the first-born of the children of Israel took he the money, a thousand three hundred and threescore and five shekels after the shekel of the sanctuary. 51. And Moses gave the money of them that were redeemed, unto Aaron and to his sons, according to the word of the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Here is the exchange made of the Levites for the first-born. 1. The first-born were numbred from a month old, *ver. 42, 43*. Those certainly were not reckoned who though first-born, were become heads of families themselves, but those only that were under age: and the learned bishop Patrick is clear of opinion, that none were numbred but those only that were born since their coming out of Egypt, when the first-born were sanctified, *Exod. xii*. If there were two and twenty thousand first-born males, we may suppose as many females, and all these brought forth in the first year after they came out of Egypt; we must infer from thence that in the last year of their servitude, even then when it was in the greatest extremity, there were abundance of marriages made among the Israelites; they were not discouraged by the present distress, but married in faith, expecting that God would shortly visit them with mercy, and their children, though born in bondage, should live in liberty and honour. And it was a token for good to them, an evidence that they were blessed of the Lord, that they were not only kept alive, but greatly increased in a barren wilderness. 2. The number of the first-born, and that of the Levites, by a special providence, came pretty near to each other; thus when he *divided the nations, he set the bounds of the people, according to the number of the children of Israel*, *Deut. xxxii. 8*. Known unto God are all his works beforehand, and there is an exact proportion between them, and so it will appear when they come to be compared. The Levites cattle are said to be taken instead of the cattle of the first-born, *i. e.* the Levites with all their possessions were devoted to God instead of the first-born and all theirs; for when we give our selves to God, all we have passeth as appurtenances with the premises. 3. The small number of first-born which exceeded the number of the Levites (two hundred seventy three in all) were to be redeemed, at five shekels apiece, and the redemption money given to Aaron; for it would not do well to have them added to the Levites. It is probable, in the exchange they began with the eldest of the first-born, and so downwards, so that those were to be redeemed with money, who were the two hundred seventy three youngest of the first-born; more likely so, than either that it was determined by lot, or that the money was paid out of the publick stock. The church is called the church of the first-born, which is redeemed not as they were with silver and gold, but being devoted by sin to the justice of God, is ransomed with *the precious blood of the Son of God*.

C H A P. IV.

In the former chapter an account was taken of the whole tribe of Levi, in this of those of that tribe that were in the prime of their time for service, betwixt thirty and fifty years old. 1. The serviceable men of the Kohathites are ordered to be numbred, and their charges given them, *ver. 2, 20*. 2. Of the Gershonites, *ver. 24, 28*. 3. Of the Merarites, *ver. 29—33*. 4. The numbers of each and the sum total at last are recorded, *ver. 34, 49*.

1. AND the LORD spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron, saying, 2. Take the sum of the sons of Kohath from among the sons of Levi, after their families

milies, by the house of their fathers ; 3. From thirty years old and upward, even until fifty years old, all that enter into the host, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation. 4. This *shall be* the service of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation, *about* the most holy things. 5. ¶ And when the camp setteth forward, Aaron shall come and his sons, and they shall take down the covering vail, and cover the ark of testimony with it : 6. And shall put thereon the covering of badgers skins, and shall spread over it a cloth wholly of blue, and shall put in the staves thereof. 7. And upon the table of shew-bread they shall spread a cloth of blue, and put thereon the dishes, and the spoons, and the bowls, and covers to cover withal : and the continual bread shall be thereon. 8. And they shall spread upon them a cloth of scarlet, and cover the same with a covering of badgers skins, and shall put in the staves thereof. 9. And they shall take a cloth of blue, and cover the candlestick of the light, and his lamps, and his tongs, and his snuff-dishes, and all the oil-vessels thereof, wherewith they minister unto it. 10. And they shall put it and all the vessels thereof within a covering of badgers skins, and shall put it upon a bar. 11. And upon the golden altar they shall spread a cloth of blue, and cover it with a covering of badgers skins, and shall put to the staves thereof. 12. And they shall take all the instruments of ministry, wherewith they minister in the sanctuary, and put *them* in a cloth of blue, and cover them with a covering of badgers skins, and shall put *them* on a bar. 13. And they shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth thereon : 14. And they shall put upon it all the vessels thereof, wherewith they minister about it, *even* the censers, the flesh-hooks, and the shovels, and the basons, all the vessels of the altar ; and they shall spread upon it a covering of badgers skins, and put to the staves of it. 15. And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, as the camp is to set forward ; after that, the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it : but they shall not touch *any* holy thing, lest they die. These *things are* the burden of the sons of Kohath, in the tabernacle of the congregation. 16. ¶ And to the office of Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, *pertaineth* the oil for the light, and the sweet incense, and the daily meat-offering, and the anointing oil, and the oversight of all the tabernacle, and of all that therein is, in the sanctuary, and in the vessels thereof. 17. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron, saying, 18. Cut ye not off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites, from among the Levites. 19. But thus do unto them, that they may live and not die, when they approach unto the most holy things ; Aaron and his sons shall go in, and appoint them every one to his service, and to his burden. 20. But they shall not go in to see when the holy things are covered, lest they die.

We have here a second muster of the tribe of Levi. As that tribe was taken out of all Israel to be God's peculiar, so the middle aged men of that tribe were taken from among the rest, to be actually employed in the service of the tabernacle. Now observe, 1. Who were to be taken into this number. All the males from thirty years old to fifty. Of the other tribes, those that were numbred to go forth to war, were from twenty years old and upward, but of the Levites, only from thirty to fifty ; for the service of God requires the best of our strength, and the prime of our time, which cannot be better spent than to the honour of him, who is the first and best. And a man may make a good soldier much sooner than a good minister.

Now, 1. They were not to be employed till they were thirty years old, because till then they were in danger of retaining something childish and youthful, and had not gravity enough to do the service, and wear the honour of a Levite. At twenty-five years old they were entered as probationers, *Numb.* viii. 24. and in David's time, when there was more work to be done, at twenty, *1 Chron.* xxiii. 24. and so *Ezra* iii. 8. but they must be five years learning, and waiting, and so fitting themselves for service ; nay, in David's time, they were ten years in preparation, from twenty to thirty. John Baptist began his publick ministry, and Christ his, at thirty years old ; it is not in the letter of it obliging to gospel ministers now, as if they must either not begin their work till thirty years old, or must leave it off at fifty ; but it gives us two good rules, (1.) That ministers must not be novices, *1 Tim.* iii. 6. It is a work that requires ripeness of judgment, and great stayedness, and therefore those are very unfit for it, who are yet but babes in knowledge, and have not put away childish things. (2.)

That they must learn before they teach, serve before they rule, and must *first be proved*, *1 Tim.* iii. 10. 2. They were discharged at fifty years old, from the toilsome part of the service, particularly this of carrying the tabernacle ; for that is the special service to which they are here ordained, and which there was most occasion for, while they were in the wilderness. When they began to enter upon old age they were dismissed. (1.) In favour to them, that they might not be over-toiled, when their strength began to decay. Twenty years good service was thought pretty well for one man. (2.) In honour to the work, that it might not be done by those, who through the infirmities of age were flow and heavy. The service of God should be done, when we are in the most lively active frame. Those do not consider this, who put off their repentance to old age, and so leave the best work to be done in the worst time. 2. How their work is described. They are said to *enter into the host*, or warfare, to do the work in the tabernacle. The ministry is, (1.) A good work, *1 Tim.* iii. 1. Ministers are not ordained to the honour only, but to the labour, not to have the wages, but to do the work. (2.) A good warfare, *1 Tim.* i. 18. They that enter into the ministry must look upon themselves as entered into the host, and approve themselves good soldiers, *2 Tim.* ii. 3.

Now as to the sons of Kohath in particular, here is, 1. Their service appointed them, in the removes of the tabernacle. Afterwards when the tabernacle was fixed they had other work assigned them : but this was the work of the day, which was to be done in its day. Observe, Wherever the camp of Israel went, the tabernacle of the Lord went with them, and care must be taken for the carriage of it. Note, Wherever we go, we must see to it, that we take our religion along with us, and not forget that, or any part of it. Now the Kohathites were to carry all the holy things of the tabernacle. They were charged with those things before, *chap.* iii. 31. but here they have more particular instructions given them. (1.) Aaron and his sons the priests must pack up the things which the Kohathites were to carry, as here directed, *ver.* 5, &c. God had before appointed, that none should come into the most holy place, but only Aaron once a year with a cloud of incense, *Lev.* xvi. 2. and yet the necessity of their unsettled state requiring it, that law is here dispensed with ; for every time they removed, Aaron and his sons went in to take down the ark, and make it up for carriage ; for (as the learned bishop Patrick suggests) the *Shechinah*, or display of the divine majesty, which was over the mercy-seat, removed for the present in the pillar of cloud which was taken up, and then the ark was not dangerous to be approached. (2.) All the holy things must be covered ; the ark and table with three coverings, all the rest with two. Even the ashes of the altar, in which the holy fire was carefully preserved and raked up, must have a purple cloth spread over them, *ver.* 13. Even the brazen altar, though in the court of the sanctuary it stood open to the view of all, yet was covered in the carriage of it. All these coverings are designed, 1. For safety, that these holy things might not be ruffled with the wind, sullied with the rain, or tarnished with the sun, but they might be preserved in their beauty. For *on all the glory shall be a defence*. The coverings of badgers skins being thick and strong would keep out wet ; and while we are in our passage through the wilderness of this world, it concerns us to be fenced for all *weathers*, *Isa.* iv. 5, 6. 2. For decency and ornament. Most of these things had a cloth of blue, or purple, or scarlet spread out-most ; and the ark was covered with a cloth *wholly of blue*, *ver.* 6. An emblem (say some) of the azure skies, which are spread like a curtain, between us and the majesty on high, *Job* xxvi. 9. Those that are faithful to God should endeavour likewise to appear beautiful before men, that they may *adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour*. 3. For concealment. It signified the darkness of that dispensation. That which is now brought to light by the gospel, and revealed to babes, was then hid from the wise and prudent. They saw only the coverings, not the holy things themselves, (*Heb.* x. 1.) but now Christ has *destroyed the face of the covering*, *Isa.* xxv. 7. (3.) When all the holy things were covered, then the Kohathites were to carry them on their shoulders. Those things that had staves were carried by their staves, *ver.* 6, 8, 11, 14. those that had not, were carried upon a bar, or bier, or bearing barrow, *ver.* 10, 12. See how the tokens of God's presence in this world are moveable things, but we look for a kingdom that cannot be moved. 2. Eleazar now the eldest son of Aaron is appointed overseer of the Kohathites in this service, *ver.* 16. he must take care that nothing was forgot, left behind or displaced. As a priest, he had more honour than the Levites, but then he had more care ; and that care was a heavier burthen, no doubt, upon his heart, than all the burthens that were laid upon their shoulders. It is much easier to do the work of the tabernacle, than to discharge the trusts of it, to obey than to rule. 3. Great care must be taken to preserve the lives of these Levites by preventing their unseasonable irreverent approach to the most holy things, *ver.* 18. *Cut ye not off the Kohathites*. Note, Those who do not what they can to keep others from sin, do what they can to cut them off. (1.) The Kohathites must not see the holy things till the priests had covered them, *ver.* 20. Even they that bore the vessels of the Lord, saw

saw not what they bore; so much were even they in the dark concerning the gospel, whose office it was to expound the law. And, (2.) when they were covered they might not touch them, at least not the ark, called here the holy thing, upon pain of death, *ver.* 15. Uzza was struck dead for the breach of this law. Thus were the Lord's ministers themselves then kept in fear, and that was a dispensation of terror, as well as darkness; but now through Christ the case is altered, we have *seen with our eyes*, and our *hands have handled the word of life*, John i. 1. and we are encouraged to *come boldly to the throne of grace*.

21. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 22. Take also the sum of the sons of Gershon, throughout the houses of their fathers, by their families; 23. From thirty years old and upward, until fifty years old, shalt thou number them; all that enter in to perform the service, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation. 24. This is the service of the families of the Gershonites, to serve, and for burdens. 25. And they shall bear the curtains of the tabernacle, and the tabernacle of the congregation, his covering, and the covering of the badgers skins that is above upon it, and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 26. And the hangings of the court, and the hanging for the door of the gate of the court which is by the tabernacle, and by the altar round about, and their cords, and all the instruments of their service, and all that is made for them: so shall they serve. 27. At the appointment of Aaron and his sons, shall be all the service of the sons of the Gershonites, in all their burdens, and in all their service; and ye shall appoint unto them in charge all their burdens. 28. This is the service of the families of the sons of Gershon, in the tabernacle of the congregation: and their charge shall be under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest. 29. ¶ As for the sons of Merari, thou shalt number them after their families, by the house of their fathers; 30. From thirty years old and upward, even unto fifty years old shalt thou number them, every one that entreth into the service, to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation. 31. And this is the charge of their burden, according to all their service in the tabernacle of the congregation; the boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and the sockets thereof, 32. And the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords, with all their instruments, and with all their service: and by name ye shall reckon the instruments of the charge of their burden. 33. This is the service of the families of the sons of Merari, according to all their service in the tabernacle of the congregation, under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

We have here the charge of the other two families of the Levites, which though not so honourable as the first, yet was necessary, and was to be done regularly. 1. The Gershonites were charged with all the drapery of the tabernacle. The curtains and hangings and the coverings of badger's skins, *ver.* 22,—26. Those they were to take down, when the cloud removed, and the ark and the rest of the holy things were carried away, to pack up and bring with them, and then to set up again, where the cloud rested. Aaron and his sons allotted to them their respective charge, you shall take care of such a curtain, and you of such a hanging, that every one might know his work, and there might be no confusion, *ver.* 27. Ithamar particularly was to take the oversight of them, *ver.* 28. 2. The Merarites were charged with the heavy carriage, the boards and bars, the pillars and sockets, the pins and cords, and those were delivered them by name, *ver.* 31, 32. An Inventory was given them of every particular, that it might be forth-coming, and nothing to seek when the tabernacle was to be set up again. Though those seemed of less importance, than the other things pertaining to the sanctuary, yet there was this care taken of them, to teach us with the greatest exactness to preserve pure and entire all divine institutions, and to take care that nothing be lost. It also intimates the care God has of his church, and every member of it; the good shepherd calls his own sheep by name, Joh. x. 3.

Here were thousands of men employed about these services, though a much less number would serve, for the bearing of those burthens; but it was requisite that the tabernacle should be taken down, and set up with great expedition, and many hands would make quick work, especially when every one knew his work. They had tents of their own to take care of, and to take along with them, but the young men under thirty, and the old men above fifty might serve for them; nor is there any mention of them,

for God's house must always be preferred before our own. Their care was preposterous who built and cycled their own houses, while God's house lay waste, *Hag.* i. 4, 9.

The death of the saints is represented as the taking down of the tabernacle, 2 Cor. v. 1. and the putting of it off, 2 Pet. i. 14. The immortal soul, like the most holy things, is first covered and taken away, carried by angels unseen, under the inspection of the Lord Jesus our Eleazar; and care is taken also of the body, the skin and flesh which are as the curtains, the bones and sinews which are as the bars and pillars; none of these shall be lost; commandment is given concerning the bones, a covenant made with the dust; these are in safe custody, and shall all be produced in the great body, when this tabernacle shall be set up again, and these vile bodies made like the glorious body of Jesus Christ.

34. ¶ And Moses and Aaron, and the chief of the congregation numbred the sons of the Kohathites, after their families, and after the house of their fathers: 35. From thirty years and upward, even unto fifty years old, every one that entreth into the service for the work in the tabernacle of the congregation. 36. And those that were numbred of them by their families, were two thousand seven hundred and fifty. 37. These were they that were numbred of the families of the Kohathites, all that might do service in the tabernacle of the congregation, which Moses and Aaron did number, according to the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses. 38. And those that were numbred of the sons of Gershon, throughout their families, and by the house of their fathers; 39. From thirty years old and upward, even unto fifty years old, every one that entreth in to the service, for the work in the tabernacle of the congregation: 40. Even those that were numbred of them, throughout their families, by the houses of their fathers, were two thousand and six hundred and thirty. 41. These are they that were numbred of the families of the sons of Gershon, of all that might do service in the tabernacle of the congregation, whom Moses and Aaron did number, according to the commandment of the LORD. 42. ¶ And those that were numbred of the families of the sons of Merari, throughout their families, by the house of their fathers; 43. From thirty years old and upward, even unto fifty years old, every one that entreth in to the service, for the work in the tabernacle of the congregation: 44. Even those that were numbred of them after their families, were three thousand and two hundred. 45. These be those that were numbred of the families of the sons of Merari, whom Moses and Aaron numbred, according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses. 46. All those that were numbred of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron, and the chief of Israel numbred, after their families, and after the house of their fathers: 47. From thirty years old and upward, even unto fifty years old, every one that came to do the service of the ministry, and the service of the burden in the tabernacle of the congregation; 48. Even those that were numbred of them, were eight thousand and five hundred and fourscore. 49. According to the commandment of the LORD, they were numbred by the hand of Moses, every one according to his service, and according to his burden: thus were they numbred of him, as the LORD commanded Moses.

We have here a particular account of the numbers of the three families of the Levites respectively, that is of the effective men, between thirty years old and fifty.

Observe, 1. That the Kohathites were in all, eight thousand and six hundred, from a month old and upward; but of those there were but two thousand seven hundred and fifty serviceable men, not a third part: The Gershonites in all, seven thousand and five hundred, and of them but two thousand six hundred and thirty serviceable men, little more than a third part. Note, Of the many that add to the numbers of the church, there are comparatively but few that contribute to the service of it. So it has been, and so it is; many have a place in the tabernacle, that do but little of the work of the tabernacle, *Phil.* ii. 20, 21. 2. That the Merarites were but six thousand and two hundred in all, and yet of these there were three thousand and two hundred serviceable men, which were a good deal above half. The greatest burthen lay upon that family, the boards, and pillars, and sockets; and God so ordered it, that though they were the fewest in number, yet they should have the most able men among them, for whatever service God calls men to, he will furnish them for it,

it, and give strength in proportion to the work, grace sufficient. 3. The whole number of the able men of the tribe of Levi, which entered into God's host to war his warfare, was but eight thousand five hundred and eighty, whereas the able men of the other tribes that entered into the host of Israel to war their warfare were many more. The least of the tribes had almost four times as many able men as the Levites, and some of them more than eight times as many: for those that are engaged in the service of this world, and war after the flesh, are many more than those that are devoted to the service of God, and *fight the good fight of faith*.

C H A P. V.

In this chapter we have, 1. An order passed pursuant to the laws already made, for the removing the unclean out of the camp, ver. 1—4. 2. A repetition of the laws concerning restitution, in case of wrong done to a neighbour, ver. 5—8. and concerning the appropriating of the hallowed things to the priests, ver. 9—10. 3. A new law made concerning the trial of a wife suspected of adultery by the waters of jealousy, ver. 11—31.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Command the children of Israel, that they put out of the camp every leper, and every one that hath an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead. 3. Both male and female shall ye put out, without the camp shall ye put them; that they defile not their camps, in the midst whereof I dwell. 4. And the children of Israel did so, and put them out without the camp: as the LORD spake unto Moses, so did the children of Israel. 5. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 6. Speak unto the children of Israel, When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, to do a trespass against the LORD, and that person be guilty; 7. Then they shall confess their sin which they have done: and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed. 8. But if the man have no kinsman to recompense the trespass unto, let the trespass be recompensed unto the LORD, even to the priest: beside the ram of the atonement, whereby an atonement shall be made for him. 9. And every offering of all the holy things of the children of Israel, which they bring unto the priest, shall be his. 10. And every mans hallowed things shall be his: whatsoever any man giveth the priest, it shall be his.

Here is, 1. A command for the purifying of the camp, by turning out from within its lines all those that were ceremonially unclean, by issues, leprosies, or the touch of dead bodies, until they were cleansed according to law, ver. 2, 3. And the executing of these orders immediately, ver. 4. (1.) The camp was now newly modelled and put in order, and therefore to compleat the reformation of it, it is next to be cleansed. Note, The purity of the church must be as carefully consulted and preserved, as the peace and order of it. It is requisite not only that every Israelite be confined to his own standard, but that every polluted Israelite be separated from it. The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable. (2.) God's tabernacle was now fixed in the midst of their camp, and therefore they must be careful to keep it clean. Note, The greater profession of religion any house or family makes, the more they are obliged to put away iniquity far from the tabernacle, Job xxii. 23. The person, the place in the midst of which God dwells must not be defiled, for if it be, he is affronted, offended, and provoked to withdraw, 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.

This expulsion of the unclean out of the camp, was to signify, (1.) What the governors of the church ought to do; they must separate between the precious and the vile, and purge out scandalous persons, as old leaven, 1 Cor. 5. 13. lest others be infected and defiled, Heb. xii. 15. It is for the glory of Christ, and the edification of his church, that those who are openly and incorrigibly profane and vicious should be put and kept from christian communion till they repent. (2.) What God himself will do in the great day; he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather out of his kingdom all things that offend. As here the unclean were shut out of the camp, so into the new Jerusalem no unclean thing shall enter, Rev. xxi. 27. 2. A law concerning restitution, in case of wrong done to a neighbour. It is called a *sin that men commit*, ver. 6. because it is common among men; a *sin of man*, i. e. a sin against man, so it is thought it should be translated and understood. If a man over-reach or defraud his brother in any matter, it is to be looked upon as a trespass against the Lord, who is the protector of right, the punisher of wrong, and who doth strictly charge and command us to do

justly. Now what is to be done when a man's awakened conscience charges him with guilt of this kind, and brings it to his remembrance though done long ago? 1. He must confess his sin, confess it to God, confess it to his neighbour, and so take shame to himself. If he have denied it before, though it go against the grain to own himself in a lie, yet he must do it; because his heart was hardened he denied it, therefore he has no other way of making it appear that his heart is now softened, but by confessing it. 2. He must bring a sacrifice, a *ram of atonement*, ver. 8. Satisfaction must be made for the offence done to God whose law is broken, as well as for the loss sustained by our neighbour; restitution in that case is not sufficient without faith and repentance. 3. Yet the sacrifices would not be accepted, till full amends was made to the party wronged, not only the principal, but a fifth part added to it, ver. 7. It is certain, while that which is got by injustice is knowingly retained in the hands, the guilt of the injustice remains upon the conscience, and is not purged by sacrifice or offering, prayers or tears, for it is one and the same continued act of sin persisted in. This law we had before, Lev. vi. 4. and it is here added, that if the party wronged were dead, and he had no near kinsman who was entitled to the debt, or it were any way uncertain to whom the restitution should be made, that should not serve for an excuse to detain what was unjustly gotten, to whomsoever it pertained, it was certainly none of his that got it by sin, and therefore it must be given to the priest, ver. 8. If there were any that could make out a title to it, it must not be given to the priest, God hates robbery for burnt-offerings; but if there were not, then it lapsed to the great Lord, (*ob defectum sanguinis*) and the priests were his receivers. Note, Some work of piety or charity is a piece of necessary justice to be done by those who are conscious to themselves that they have done wrong, but know not how otherwise to make restitution; what is not our property, will never be our profit. 3. A general rule concerning hallowed things given upon this occasion, that whatever was given to the priest, *his it shall be*, ver. 9, 10. 1. He that gave it shall not receive his gift, upon any pretence whatsoever. This law ratifies and confirms all grants for pious uses, that people might not give things to the priests in a pang, and then recall them in a fret. 2. The other priests shall not come in sharers with that priest who then officiated, and to whom the hallowed thing, whatever it was, was given. Let him that was most ready and diligent in attending, fare the better for it: if he do the work, let him have the pay, and much good may it do him.

11. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 12. Speak unto the children of Israel; and say unto them, If any mans wife go aside, and commit a trespass against him, 13. And a man lie with her carnally, and it be hid from the eyes of her husband, and be kept close, and she be defiled, and there be no witness against her, neither she be taken with the manner; 14. And the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled; or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled: 15. Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon, for it is an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance. 16. And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before the LORD. 17. And the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel, and of the dust that is in the floor of the tabernacle the priest shall take, and put it into the water. 18. And the priest shall set the woman before the LORD, and uncover the womans head, and put the offering of memorial in her hands, which is the jealousy-offering: and the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that causeth the curse. 19. And the priest shall charge her by an oath, and say unto the woman, If no man have lien with thee, and if thou hast not gone aside to uncleanness with another instead of thy husband, be thou free from this bitter water that causeth the curse: 20. But if thou hast gone aside to another instead of thy husband, and if thou be defiled, and some man hath lien with thee beside thine husband: 21. Then the priest shall charge the woman with an oath of cursing, and the priest shall say unto the woman, The LORD make thee a curse and an oath among thy people, when the LORD doth make thy thigh to rot, and thy belly to swell; 22. And this water that causeth the curse shall go into thy bowels, to make thy belly to swell, and thy thigh to rot: And the woman shall say, Amen, Amen. 23. And the priest

priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall blot *them* out with the bitter water: 24. And he shall cause the woman to drink the bitter water that causeth the curse: and the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, and become bitter. 25. Then the priest shall take the jealousy-offering out of the womans hand, and shall wave the offering before the LORD, and offer it upon the altar. 26. And the priest shall take an handful of the offering, even the memorial thereof, and burn it upon the altar, and afterward shall cause the woman to drink the water. 27. And when he hath made her to drink the water, then it shall come to pass, that if she be defiled, and have done trespass against her husband; that the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, and become bitter, and her belly shall swell, and her thigh shall rot: and the woman shall be a curse among her people. 28. And if the woman be not defiled, but be clean; then she shall be free, and shall conceive seed. 29. This is the law of jealousies, when a wife goeth aside to another instead of her husband, and is defiled; 30. Or when the spirit of jealousy cometh upon him, and he be jealous over his wife, and shall set the woman before the LORD, and the priest shall execute upon her all this law. 31. Then shall the man be guiltless from iniquity, and this woman shall bear her iniquity.

We have here the law concerning the solemn trial of a wife, whose husband was jealous of her. Observe, 1. What was the case supposed, That a man had some reason to suspect his wife to have committed adultery, *ver. 12, 13, 14.* Here, 1. The sin of adultery is justly represented as an exceeding sinful sin; it is going aside from God and virtue, and the good way, *Prov. ii. 17.* It is committing a trespass against the husband, robbing him of his honour, alienating his right, introducing a spurious brood into his family to share with his children in his estate, and violating her covenant with him: it is being defiled, for nothing pollutes the mind and conscience more than this sin doth. 2. It is supposed to be a sin that great care is taken by the sinners to conceal; which there is no witness of; *the eye of the adulterer waits for the twilight*, Job xxiv. 15. And the adulteress takes her opportunity when *the good man is not at home*, *Prov. vii. 19.* It would not covet to be secret if it were not shameful; and the devil that draws sinners to this sin, teaches them how to cover it. 3. The *spirit of jealousy* is supposed to come upon the husband, of which Solomon saith, it is the *rage of a man*, *Prov. vi. 34.* and that it is *cruel as the grave*, *Cant. viii. 6.* 4. Yet (say the Jewish writers) he must make it to appear that he has some just cause for the suspicion. The rule they give is, If the husband have said unto his wife before witnesses, "Be not thou in secret with such a man;" and notwithstanding that admonition, it is afterwards proved that she was in secret with that man, though her father, or brother, then he may compel her to drink the bitter water. But the law here doth not tie him to that particular method of proving the just cause of his suspicion; it might be otherwise proved. In case it could be proved that she had committed adultery, she was to be put to death, *Lev. xx. 10.* but if it were uncertain, then this law took place. From hence, (1.) Let all wives be admonished not to give any the least occasion for the suspicion of their chastity; it is not enough that they abstain from the evil of uncleanness, but they must *abstain from all appearance* of it, from every thing that looks like it, or leads to it, or may give the least umbrage to jealousy, for *how great a matter may a little fire kindle?* (2.) Let all husbands be admonished not to entertain any causeless or unjust suspicions of their wives. If charity in general, much more conjugal affection teacheth to *think no evil*, *1 Cor. xiii. 5.* It is the happiness of the virtuous woman, that *the heart of her husband doth safely trust in her*, *Prov. xxxi. 11.* 2. What was the course prescribed in this case, (1.) That if the suspected wife were innocent, she might not continue under the reproach and uneasiness of her husband's jealousy. (2.) That if she were guilty, her sin might find her out, and others might hear and fear, and take warning. Now the process of the trial must be thus. 1. Her husband must bring her to the priest, with the witnesses that could prove the ground of his suspicion, and desire she might be put upon her trial. The Jews say, the priest was first to endeavour to persuade her to confess the truth, saying to this purpose. "Dear daughter, Perhaps thou wast overtaken by drinking wine, or wast carried away by the heat of youth, or the examples of ill neighbours; come, confess the truth for the sake of his great name which is described in the most sacred ceremony, and do not let it be blotted out with the bitter water." If she confessed, saying, I am defiled, she was not put to death, but was divorced and lost her dowry; if she said, I am pure, then they proceeded. 2. He must bring a coarse offering of barley meal,

without oil or frankincense, agreeable to the present afflicted state of his family, for a great affliction it was, either to have cause to be jealous, or to be jealous without cause. It is an *offering of memorial*, to signify that what was to be done, was intended as a religious appeal to the omniscience and justice of God. 3. The priest was to prepare the water of jealousy; holy water out of the laver at which the priests were to wash when they ministered; this must be brought in an earthen vessel, containing (they say) about a pint; and it must be an earthen vessel, because the coarser and plainer every thing was, the more agreeable it was to the occasion. Dust must be put into the water, to signify the reproach she lay under, and the shame she ought to take to her self, putting her mouth in the dust, but dust from the floor of the tabernacle, to put an honour upon every thing that pertained to the place God had chosen to put his name there, and to keep up in the people a reverence for it; see *John viii. 6.* 4. The woman was to be set before the Lord, at the east gate of the temple court, (say the Jews) and her head was to be uncovered, in token of her sorrowful condition, and there she stood for a spectacle to the world, that other women might learn not to do *after her lewdness*, *Ezek. xxiii. 48.* Only the Jews say, her own servants were not to be present, that she might not seem vile in their sight, who were to give honour to her; her husband also must be dismissed. 5. The priest was to adjure her to tell the truth, and to denounce the curse of God against her if she were guilty, and to declare what would be the effect of her drinking the water of jealousy, *ver. 19, 20, 21, 22.* He must assure her, that if she were innocent the water would do her no harm, *ver. 19.* None need fear the curse of the law, if they have not broken the commands of the law. But if she were guilty, this water would be poison to her, it would make *her belly to swell, and her thigh to rot*, and she should be a curse or abomination among her people, *ver. 21, 22.* To this she must say Amen, as Israel must do to the curses pronounced on mount Ebal, *Deut. xxvii. 17.* Some think the Amen, being doubled, respects both parts of the adjuration, both that which freed her, if innocent, and that which condemned her if guilty. No woman if she were guilty could say Amen to this adjuration, and drink the water upon it, unless she disbelieved the truth of God, or defied his justice, and was come to such a pitch of impudence and hard-heartedness in sin, as to challenge God Almighty to do his worst, and chuse rather to venture upon his curse, than to give him glory by making confession; thus has whoredom *taken away the heart*. 6. The priest was to write this curse in a scrip or scroll of parchment, *verbatim*, as he had expressed it, and then to wipe or scrape out what he had written into the water, *ver. 23.* to signify that it was that curse which impregnated the water, and gave it its strength to effect what was intended. It signified that if she were innocent the curse should be blotted out, and never appear against her, as it is written, *Isa. xliii. 25. I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions*; and *Psal. li. 9. Blot out mine iniquities.* But that if she were guilty, the curse, as it was written, being infused into the water, it would enter into her bowels with the water, even *like oil into her bones*, *Psal. cix. 18.* as we read of a curse entering into a house, *Zech. v. 4.* 7. The woman must then drink the water, *ver. 24.* it is called the bitter water, some think because they put wormwood in it to make it bitter, or rather, because it caused the curse. Thus sin is called *an evil thing and a bitter*, for the same reason, because it *causeth the curse*, *Jer. ii. 19.* If she had been guilty, (and otherwise it did not cause the curse) she was made to know that though her stolen waters had been sweet, and her bread eaten in secret pleasant, yet the end was *bitter as wormwood*, *Prov. ix. 17.* and chap. v. 4. Let all that meddle with forbidden pleasures know that they will be bitterness in the latter end. The Jews say, that if upon denouncing the curses the woman was so terrified that she durst not drink the water, but confessed she was defiled, the priest flung down the water, and cast her offering among the ashes, and she was divorced without dowry: if she confessed not, and yet would not drink, they forced her to it; and if she were ready to throw it up again, they hastened her away, that she might not pollute the holy place. 8. Before she drank the water, the jealousy-offering was waved and offered upon the altar, *ver. 25, 26.* a handful of it was burnt for a memorial, and the remainder of it eaten by the priests, unless the husband were a priest, and then it was scattered among the ashes. This offering in the midst of the transaction, signified that the whole was an appeal to God, as a God that knows all things, and *from whom no secret is hid.*

Lastly, All things being thus performed according to the law, they were to wait the issues. The water with a little dust put into it, and the scrapings of a written parchment, had no natural tendency at all to do either good or hurt; but if God was thus appealed to in the way of an instituted ordinance, though otherwise the innocent might have continued under suspicion, and the guilty undiscovered, yet God would so far own his own institution, as that in a little time, by the miraculous operation of providence, the innocency of the innocent should be cleared, and the sin of the guilty should find them out. 1. If the

suspected woman were really guilty, the water she drunk would be poison to her, *ver. 37.* her belly would swell, and her thigh rot by a vile disease for vile deserts, and she would *mourn at the last, when her flesh and her body are consumed,* Prov. v. 19. Bishop Patrick saith, from some of the Jewish writers, that the effect of these waters appeared presently, she grew pale, and her eyes ready to start out of her head. Dr. Lightfoot saith, that sometimes it appeared not of two or three years, but she bare no children, was sickly, languished, and rotted at last; it is probable, some indications appeared presently. The Rabbins say, the adulterer also died the same day and hour that the adulteress did; and in the same manner too; that his belly swelled, and his secret parts rotted: a disease perhaps not much unlike that which in these latter ages the avenging hand of a righteous God has made the scourge of uncleanness, and with which whores and whoremongers infect and plague, and ruin one another, since they escape punishment from men. The Jewish doctors add, that the waters had this effect upon the adulteress only, in case the husband had never offended in the same kind; but if he had at any time defiled the marriage-bed, God did not thus right him against his injurious wife; and that therefore in the latter and degenerate ages of the Jewish church, when uncleanness did abound, this way of trial was generally disused and laid aside: men knowing their own crimes, were content not to know their wives crimes. And to this perhaps may refer that threatening, *Hos. iv. 14. I will not punish your spouses when they commit adultery, for your selves are separated with whores.* 2. If she were innocent, the water she drunk would be physick to her, *ver. 28. She shall be free, and shall conceive seed.* The Jewish writers magnify the good effects of this water to the innocent woman; that to recompense her for the wrong done to her by the suspicion, she should after the drinking of these waters, be stronger and look better than ever; if she were sickly she should become healthful, should bear a man-child, and have easy labour.

From the whole we may learn, 1. That secret sins are known to God, and sometimes are strangely brought to light in this life; however there is a day coming when God will by Jesus Christ, as here by the priest, judge the *secrets of men according to the gospel*, Rom. ii. 16. 2. That in particular, *Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.* The violation of conjugal faith and chastity is highly provoking to the God of heaven, and sooner or later it will be reckoned for. Though we have not now the waters of jealousy to be a sensible terror to the unclean, yet we have a word from God which ought to be as great a terror, that if *any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy*, 1 Cor. iii. 17. 3. That God will find out some way or other to clear the innocency of the innocent, and to bring forth their righteousness as the light. 4. That to the pure all things are pure, but to the defiled nothing is so, *Tit. i. 15.* The same word is to some a *savour of life unto life, to others a savour of death unto death*, like those waters of jealousy, according as they receive it; the same providence is for good to some, and for hurt to others, *Jer. xxiv. 5, 9.* And whatsoever it is intended for, it shall not return void.

C H A P. VI.

In this chapter we have, 1. The law concerning Nazarites, (1.) What it was which the vow of a Nazarite obliged him to, *ver. 1—8.* (2.) A remedial law in case a Nazarite happened to be polluted by the touch of a dead body, *ver. 9—12.* (3.) The solemnity of his discharge when his time was up, *ver. 13—21.* 2. Instructions given to the priests how they should bless the people, *ver. 22—27.*

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the LORD: 3. He shall separate himself from wine, and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes or dried. 4. All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine-tree, from the kernels even to the husk. 5. All the days of the vow of his separation, there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled in the which he separateth himself unto the LORD, he shall be holy; and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow. 6. All the days that he separateth himself unto the LORD, he shall come at no dead body. 7. He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister, when they die: because the consecration of his God is upon his head. 8. All the days of his separation he is holy unto the LORD. 9. And if any

man die very suddenly by him, and he hath defiled the head of his consecration; then he shall shave his head in the day of his cleansing, on the seventh day shall he shave it. 10. And on the eighth day he shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 11. And the priest shall offer the one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering, and make an atonement for him, for that he sinned by the dead, and shall hallow his head that same day. 12. And he shall consecrate unto the LORD the days of his separation, and shall bring a lamb of the first year for a trespass-offering: but the days that were before shall be lost, because his separation was defiled. 13. ¶ And this is the law of the Nazarite: When the days of his separation are fulfilled, he shall be brought unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 14. And he shall offer his offering unto the LORD, one he-lamb of the first year without blemish, for a burnt offering, and one ew-lamb of the first year without blemish, for a sin-offering, and one ram without blemish, for peace-offerings. 15. And a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, and wafers of unleavened bread anointed with oil, and their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings. 16. And the priest shall bring them before the LORD, and shall offer his sin-offering, and his burnt-offering. 17. And he shall offer the ram, for a sacrifice of peace-offerings unto the LORD, with the basket of unleavened bread: the priest shall offer also his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. 18. And the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; and shall take the hair of the head of his separation, and put it in the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace-offerings. 19. And the priest shall take the sodden shoulder of the ram, and one unleavened cake out of the basket, and one unleavened wafer; and shall put them upon the hands of the Nazarite, after the hair of his separation is shaven. 20. And the priest shall wave them for a wave-offering before the LORD: this is holy for the priest, with the wave-breast, and heave shoulder: and after that the Nazarite may drink wine. 21. This is the law of the Nazarite, who hath vowed, and of his offering unto the LORD for his separation, besides that that his hand shall get: according to the vow which he vowed, so he must do after the law of his separation.

After the law for the discovery and shame of those that by sin had made themselves vile, fitly follows this for the direction and encouragement of those that by their eminent piety and devotion made themselves honourable, and distinguished themselves from their neighbours. It is very probable, there were those before the making of this law, that went under the character of Nazarites, and were celebrated by that title, as persons professing greater strictness and zeal in religion than other people; for the vow of a Nazarite is spoken of here, as a thing already well known, but the obligation of it is reduced to a greater certainty, than hitherto it had been. Joseph is called a Nazarite among his brethren, *Gen. xlix. 26.* Not only because separate from them, but because eminent among them.

Observe, 1. The general character of a Nazarite; it is a person separated unto the Lord, *ver. 2.* Some were Nazarites for life, either by divine designation, as Sampson, *Judg. xiii. 5.* And John Baptist, *Luke i. 15.* Or by their parents vow concerning them, as Samuel, *1 Sam. i. 11.* Of these this law speaks not: Others were so for a certain time, and by their own voluntary engagement, and concerning them rules are given by this law. A woman might bind her self with the vow of a Nazarite, under the limitations we find, *Numb. xxx. 3.* where the vow which the woman is supposed to vow unto the Lord, seems to be meant especially of this vow. The Nazarites were, (1.) Devoted to the Lord during the time of their nazariteship, and, it is probable, spent much of their time in the study of the law, in acts of devotion, and instructing others. An air of piety was thereby put upon them, and upon their whole conversation. (2.) They were separated from common persons and common things. Those that are consecrated to God, must not be conformed to this world. They distinguished themselves not only from others, but from what they themselves were before and after. (3.) They separated themselves by vowing a vow; every Israelite was bound by the divine law to love God with all his heart, but the Nazarites by their own act and deed bound themselves to some religious observances, as fruits and expressions of that love, which other Israelites

elites were not bound to. Some such there were whose spirits God stirred up to be in their day the ornaments of the church, the standard bearers of religion, and patterns of piety. It is spoken of as a great favour to their nation, that God raised up of their young men for Nazarites, Amos ii. 11. The Nazarites were known in the streets, and respected as purer than snow, whiter than milk, Lam. iv. 7. Christ was called in reproach a Nazarene, so were his followers, but he was no Nazarite according to this law, he drank wine, and touched dead bodies, yet in him this type had its accomplishment, for in him all purity and perfection meet; and every true christian is a spiritual Nazarite separated by vow unto the Lord. We find St. Paul by the persuasion of his friends, in complaisance to the Jews, submitting to this law of the Nazarites; but at the same time it is declared, that the Gentiles should observe no such thing, Acts xxi. 24, 25. It was looked upon as a great honour to a man to be a Nazarite, and therefore if a man speak of it as a punishment, as suppose he say, He be a Nazarite rather than do so or so, he is (say the Jews) a wicked man; but he that vows to the Lord in way of holiness to be a Nazarite, lo, the crown of his God is upon his head. 2. The particular obligations that the Nazarites lay under; that the families of superstitious men might not multiply their restraints endlessly. God himself lays down the law for them, and gives them the rule of their profession. 1. They must have nothing to do with the fruit of the vine, ver. 3, 4. They must drink no wine nor strong drink, nor eat grapes, no not the kernel or the husk, they might not so much as eat a raisin. The learned Dr. Lightfoot hath a conjecture (*Hor. Heb. in Luc. i. 15*) that as the ceremonial pollutions by leprosy and otherwise represented the sinful state of fallen man, so the institution of the order of Nazarites was designed to represent the pure and perfect state of man in innocency, and that the tree of knowledge forbidden to Adam, was the vine, and for that reason it was forbidden to the Nazarites, and all the produce of it. They did the tempter's work who gave the Nazarites wine to drink, Amos ii. 12. persuading them to that forbidden fruit. That it was reckoned a perfection and praise not to drink wine, appears by the instance of the Rechabites, Jer. xxxv. 6. They were to drink no wine. 1. That they might be examples of temperance and mortification. Those that separate themselves to God and to his honour, must not gratify the desires of the body, but keep that under and bring it into subjection. Drinking a little wine for the stomach's sake is allowed, to help that, 1 Tim. v. 23. But drinking much wine for the palate's sake, to please that, doth by no means become those who profess to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2. That they might be qualified to employ themselves in the service of God. They must not drink lest they forget the law, Prov. xxxi. 5. lest they should err through wine, Isa. xxviii. 7. Let all christians oblige themselves to be very moderate in the use of wine and strong drink, for if the love of these once get the mastery of a man, he becomes a very easy prey to Satan. It is observable, that because they were to drink no wine, (which was the thing mainly intended) they were to eat nothing that came of the vine, to teach us, with the utmost care and caution to avoid sin, and every thing that borders upon it, and leads to it, or may be a temptation to us. Abstain from all appearance of evil, 1 Thess. v. 22. 2. They must not cut their hair, ver. 5. They must neither poll their heads, nor shave their beards; this was that mark of Sampson's nazariteship which we often read of in his story. Now, (1.) This signified a noble neglect of the body, and the ease and ornament of it, which became those who being separated to God ought to be wholly taken up with their souls, to secure their peace and beauty. It signified, that they had for the present renounced all sort of sensual pleasures and delights, and resolved to live a life of self-denial and mortification. Mephibosheth in sorrow trimmed not his beard, 2 Sam. xix. 24. (2.) Some observe that long hair is spoken of as a badge of subjection, 1 Cor. xi. 5, &c. So that the long hair of the Nazarites noted their subjection to God, and their putting themselves under his dominion. (3.) By this they were known to all that met them to be Nazarites, and so it commanded respect. It made them look great without art; it was nature's crown to the head, and a testimony for them that they had preserved their purity. For if they had been defiled, their hair must have been cut, ver. 9. see Jer. vii. 29. 3. They must not come near any dead body, ver. 6, 7. Others might touch dead bodies, and contracted only a ceremonial pollution by it for some time, some must do it, else the dead must be unburied, but the Nazarites must not do it upon pain of forfeiting all the honour of their nazariteship. They must not attend the funeral of any relation, no not father or mother, no more than the high priest himself, because the consecration of his God is upon his head. Those that separate themselves to God must learn, 1. To distinguish themselves, and do more than others. 2. To keep their consciences pure from dead works, and not to touch the unclean thing. The greater profession of religion we make, and the more eminent we appear, the greater care we must take to avoid all sin, for we have so much the more honour to lose by it. 3. To moderate their affections even to their near relations, so as not to let their sorrow for the loss of

them break in upon their joy in God, and submission to his will. See Matt. viii. 21, 22. 4. All the days of their separation they must be holy to the Lord, ver. 8. This was the meaning of those external observances, and without this they were of no account. The Nazarites must be devoted to God, employed for him, and their minds intent upon him; they must keep themselves pure in heart and life, and be in every thing conformable to the divine image and will; this is to be holy, this is to be a Nazarite indeed. 3. The provision that was made for the cleansing of a Nazarite, if he happened unavoidably to contract a ceremonial pollution by the touch of a dead body. No penalty is ordered by this law for the wilful breach of the foregoing laws, for it was not supposed that a man who had so much religion as to make that vow, could have so little as to break it presumptuously: nor could it be supposed, that he should drink wine, or have his hair cut, but by his own fault; but purely by the providence of God, without any fault of his own, he might be near a dead body, and that is the case put ver. 9. If a man die very suddenly by him, he has defiled the head of his consecration. Note, Death sometimes takes men away very suddenly, and without any previous warning. A man might be well and dead in so little a time, as that the most careful Nazarite could not avoid being polluted by the dead body; so short a step is it sometimes, and so soon taken, from time to eternity. God prepare us for sudden death!

In this case, 1. He must be purified from the ceremonial pollution he had contracted, as others must upon the seventh day, ver. 9. Nay, more was required for the purifying of a Nazarite than of another person that had touched a dead body; he must bring a sin-offering and a burnt-offering, and an atonement must be made for him, ver. 10, 11. This teacheth us, that sins of infirmity, and the faults we are overtaken in by surprize, must be seriously repented of, and an application made of the virtue of Christ's sacrifice to our souls for the forgiveness of them every day. 1 John ii. 1, 2. And that if those who make an eminent profession of religion do any thing to sully the reputation of their profession, more is expected from them than others, for the retrieving both of their peace, and of their credit. 2. He must begin the days of his separation again, for all that were past before his pollution, though coming never so near the period of his time set, were lost and not reckoned to him, ver. 12. This obliged them to be very careful not to defile themselves by the dead, for that was the only thing that lost their time, and it teacheth us, That if a righteous man turn away from his righteousness, and defile himself with dead works, all his righteousness that he has done shall be lost to him, Ezek. xxxiii. 13. It is all lost, all in vain, if he do not persevere, Gal. iii. 4. He must begin again, and do his first-works. 4. The law for the solemn discharge of a Nazarite from his vow, when he had compleated the time he fixed to himself; before the expiration of that term he could not be discharged; before he vowed it was in his own power, but it was too late after the vow to make enquiry; the Jews say, that the time of a Nazarite's vow could not be less than thirty days; and if a man said, I will be a Nazarite but for two days, yet he was bound for thirty; but it should seem Paul's vow was but seven days, Acts xxi. 27. Or rather, then he observed the ceremony of finishing that vow of nazariteship, from which being at a distance from the temple, he had discharged himself some years before at Cenchrea, only by the ceremony of cutting his hair, Acts xviii. 18.

When the time of the vowed separation was out, he was to be made free (1.) Publickly, at the door of the tabernacle, ver. 13. That all might take notice of the finishing of his vow, and none might be offended, if they saw him now drink wine who had so lately refused. (2.) It was to be done with sacrifices, ver. 14. Lest he should think that by this eminent piece of devotion he had made God a debtor to him, he is appointed even when he had finished his vow to bring an offering to God, for when we have done our utmost in duty to God, still we must own our selves behind hand with him. He must bring one of each sort of the instituted offerings. (1.) A burnt-offering, as an acknowledgment of God's sovereign dominion over him, and all he had still, notwithstanding his discharge from this particular vow. (2.) A sin-offering. This though mentioned second, ver. 14. yet seems to have been offered first, ver. 16. for atonement must be made for our sins, before any of our sacrifices can be accepted. And it is very observable, that even the Nazarite, that in the eye of men was purer than snow, and whiter than milk, yet durst not appear before the holy God without a sin-offering. Though he had fulfilled the vow of his separation without any pollution, yet he must bring a sacrifice for sin, for there is guilt insensibly contracted by the best of men, even in their best works; some good omitted, some ill admitted, which if we were dealt with in strict justice would be our ruin; and which make it necessary for us to receive the atonement, and plead it as our righteousness before God. (3.) A peace-offering, in thankfulness to God who had enabled him to fulfil his vow, and in supplication to God for grace, to preserve him from ever doing any thing unbecoming one that had been once a Nazarite; remembering, that

that though he was now freed from the bonds of his own vow, he still remained under the bonds of the divine law. (4.) To those were added the meat-offerings and drink-offerings, according to the manner, *ver. 15, 17.* for these always accompanied the burnt-offerings and meat-offerings: and besides those, a basket of unleavened cakes, and wafers. (5.) Part of the peace-offering, with a cake and wafer, was to be waved for a *wave-offering*, *ver. 19, 20.* and this was a gratuity to the priest, who had it for his pains, after it had been first presented to God. (6.) Besides all this, he might bring his free-will offerings, *such as his hand shall get*, *ver. 21.* More than this he might bring, but not less. And to grace the solemnity, it was common upon this occasion to have their friends to be at *charges with them*, *Acts xxi. 24.* Lastly, One ceremony more was appointed, which was like the cancelling of the bond when the condition is performed, and that was the *cutting off his hair*, which had been suffered to grow all the time of his being a Nazarite, and burning it in the fire over which the peace-offerings were boiling, *ver. 18.* This intimated, that his full performance of his vow was acceptable to God in Christ the great sacrifice, and not otherwise. Learn hence, to *vow and pay to the Lord our God*, for he has no pleasure in fools.

22. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 23. Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, 24. The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: 25. The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: 26. The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. 27. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them.

Here, 1. The priests among other good offices they were to do, are appointed solemnly to bless the people in the name of the Lord, *ver. 23.* It was part of their work, *Deut. xxi. 5.* Hereby God put an honour upon the priests, for the less is blessed of the better; and hereby he gave great comfort and satisfaction to the people, who looked upon the priest as God's mouth to them. Though the priest of himself could do no more but beg a blessing, yet being an intercessor by office, and doing that in his name, who commands the blessing, the prayer carried with it a promise, and he pronounced it as one having authority, with his hands lifted up, and his face towards the people. Now, 1. This was a type of Christ's errand into the world, which was to *bless us*, *Acts iii. 26.* as the high priest of our profession. The last thing he did on earth was with up-listed hands to bless his disciples, *Luke xxiv. 50, 51.* The learned bishop Pierson observes it as a tradition of the Jews, that the priests blessed the people only at the close of the morning sacrifice, not of the evening sacrifice, to shew (saith he) that in the last days, the days of the Messiah, which are (as it were) the evening of the world, the benediction of the law should cease, and the blessing of Christ should take place. 2. It was a pattern to gospel ministers, the masters of assemblies, who are in like manner to dismiss their solemn assemblies with a blessing. The same that are God's mouth to his people, to teach and command them, are his mouth likewise to bless them; and they that receive the law, shall receive the blessing. The Hebrew doctors warn the people that they say not, "What availeth the blessing of this poor simple priest? For (say they) the receiving of the blessing dependeth not on the priest, but on the holy blessed God." 2. A form of blessing is here prescribed them in other of their devotions; but this being God's command of the blessing, that it might not look like any thing of their own, he puts the very words into their mouths, *ver. 24, 25, 26.* Where observe, (1.) That the blessing is commanded upon each particular person, *the Lord bless thee.* They must each of them prepare themselves to receive the blessing, and then they should find enough in it to make them every man happy; *blessed shalt thou be*, *Deut. xxviii. 3.* If we take the law to our selves, we may take the blessing to our selves, as if our names were inserted. (2.) That the name Jehovah is three times reported in it, and (as the critics observe) each with a different accent, in the original; the Jews themselves think there is some mystery, and we know what it is, the New Testament having explained it, which directs us to expect the blessing from *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of the Father, and the communion of the holy Ghost*, each of which persons is Jehovah, and yet they are not three Lords, but one Lord, *2 Cor. xiii. 14.* (3.) That the favour of God is all in all in this blessing, for that is the fountain of all good. (1.) *The Lord bless thee!* Our blessing God is only our speaking well of him, his blessing us is doing well for us; those whom he blesteth, they are blessed indeed. (2.) *The Lord make his face shine upon thee!* Alluding to the shining of the sun upon the earth, to enlighten and comfort it, and to renew the face of it. The Lord love thee, and make thee to know that he loves thee; we cannot but be happy, if we have God's love, and we cannot but be easy, if we know

that we have it. (3.) *The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee!* This is to the same purpose with the former, and it seems to allude to the smiles of a father upon his child, or of a man upon his friend whom he takes pleasure in. If God give us the assurances of his special favour, and his acceptance of us; that will put gladness into the heart, *Psalms iv. 7, 8.* (4.) That the fruits of this favour conveyed by this blessing, are protection, pardon, and peace. 1. Protection from evil, *ver. 24.* The Lord keep thee, for it is he that keepeth Israel, and neither slumbers nor sleeps, *Psalms cxxi. 4.* And all believers are kept by the power of God. 2. Pardon of sin, *ver. 25.* The Lord be gracious, or merciful, unto thee. 3. Peace, *ver. 26.* including all that good, which goes to make up a compleat happiness. 3. God here promiseth to ratify and confirm the blessing, *ver. 27.* *They shall put my name upon the children of Israel.* God gives them leave to make use of his name in blessing the people, and to bless them as his people, called by his name. This included all the blessings they could pronounce upon them, to mark them for God's peculiar, the people of his choice and love. God's name upon them was their honour, their comfort, their safety, their plea, *we are called by thy name, leave us not.* It is added, *and I will bless them.* Note, A divine blessing goes along with divine institutions, and puts virtue and efficacy into them. What Christ saith of the peace is true of the blessing, when God's ministers pronounce the blessing, peace be to this congregation, if the sons of peace, and heirs of blessing be there, the peace, the blessing shall rest upon them, *Luke x. 5, 6.* For in every place where God doth record his name, he will meet his people and bless them.

CHAP. VII.

God having set up house (as it were) in the midst of the camp of Israel, the princes of Israel here come a visiting with their presents, as tenants to their landlord, in the name of their respective tribes. They brought presents, 1. Upon the dedication of the tabernacle, for the service of that, *ver. 1—9.* 2. Upon the dedication of the altar, for the use of that, *ver. 10—88.* And, 3. God graciously signified his acceptance of what was done, *ver. 89.* The two foregoing chapters were the records of additional laws God gave to Israel, this is the history of the additional services which Israel performed to God.

1. **A**ND it came to pass on the day that Moses had fully set up the tabernacle, and had anointed it, and sanctified it, and all the instruments thereof, both the altar and all the vessels thereof, and had anointed them, and sanctified them; 2. That the princes of Israel, heads of the house of their fathers (who were the princes of the tribes, and were over them that were numbred) offered: 3. And they brought their offering before the LORD, six covered wagons, and twelve oxen; a wagon for two of the princes, and for each one an ox: and they brought them before the tabernacle. 4. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 5. Take it of them, that they may be to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; and thou shalt give them unto the Levites, to every man according to his service. 6. And Moses took the wagons and the oxen, and gave them unto the Levites. 7. Two wagons and four oxen he gave unto the sons of Gershon, according to their service. 8. And four wagons and eight oxen he gave unto the sons of Merari, according unto their service, under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest. 9. But unto the sons of Kohath he gave none: because the service of the sanctuary belonging unto them, was that they should bear upon their shoulders.

Here is the offering of the princes to the service of the tabernacle. Observe, 1. When it was, not till it was fully set up, *ver. 1.* When all things were done both about the tabernacle itself, and the camp of Israel which surrounded it, according to the directions given, then they began their presents; probably about the eighth day of the second month. Note, Necessary observances must always take place of free-will offerings: first those, and then these. 2. Who they were that offered, *The princes of Israel, heads of the house of their fathers*, *ver. 2.* Note, Those that are above others in power and dignity, ought to go before others, and endeavour to go beyond them in every thing that is good. The more any are advanced, the more is expected from them, for the greater opportunity they have of serving God, and their generation. What is wealth and authority good for, but as they enable a man to do so much the more good in the world. 3. What they offered; six wagons with each of them a yoke of oxen to draw them, *ver. 3.* Doubtless these wagons were agreeable

greable to the rest of the furniture of the tabernacle, and its appurtenances, the best of the kind, like the carriages which great princes use, when they go in progress. Some think, God by Moses intimated to them what they should bring; or their own consideration perhaps suggested to them to make this present. Though God's wisdom had ordained all the essentials of the tabernacle, yet it seems these accidental conveniencies were left to be provided by their own discretion, which was to set in order that which was wanting, (*Tit. i. 5.*) and these wagons were not refused, though no pattern of them was shewn to Moses in the mount. Note, It must not be expected that the divine institution of ordinances should descend to all those circumstances which are determinable, and are fit to be left alterable by human prudence, that wisdom which is profitable to direct. Observe, No sooner is the tabernacle fully set up, but this provision is made for the removal of it. Note, Even when we are but just settled in the world, and think we are beginning to take root, we must be preparing for changes and removes, especially for the great change. While we are here in this world, every thing must be accommodated to a militant and moveable state. When the tabernacle was in the framing, the princes were very generous in their offerings, for then they brought *precious stones, and stones to be set*, *Exod. xxxv. 27.* yet now they bring more presents. Note, Those that have done good, should study to abound therein yet more and more, and not be *weary of well-doing.* 4. How their offering was disposed of, and what use was made of it. The wagons and oxen were given to the Levites, to be used in carrying the tabernacle, both for their ease, for God would not have any of his servants over-burthened with work; and for the more safe and right conveyance of the several parts of the tabernacle; which would be best kept together, and sheltered from the weather in wagons. 1. The Gershonites that had the light carriage, the curtains and hangings, had but two wagons, and two yoke of oxen, *ver. 7.* when they had loaded those they must carry the rest, if any remained, upon their shoulders. 2. The Merarites that had the heavy carriage, and that which was most unwieldy, the boards, pillars, sockets, &c. had four wagons, and four yoke of oxen allotted them, *ver. 8.* and yet if they had not more wagons of their own, they would be obliged to carry a great deal upon their backs too, for the very silver sockets weighed a hundred talents, which was above four tun, and that was enough to load four wagons that were drawn but by one yoke of oxen apiece. But each socket being a talent weight, which is about a man's burthen (as appears *2 Kings v. 23.*) probably they carried those on their backs, and put the boards and pillars into the wagons. Observe here, How God wisely and graciously ordered the most strength to those that had the most work. Each had wagons *according to their service.* Whatever burthen God in his providence lays upon us, he will by his sufficient grace proportion the strength to it, *1 Cor. x. 13.* 3. The Kohathites that had the most sacred carriage had no wagons at all, because that which was their charge they were to carry upon their shoulders, *ver. 9.* with a particular care and veneration. When in David's time they carried the ark in a cart, God made them to know to their terror, by the death of Uzza, that they did not *seek him in the due order.* See *1 Chron. xv. 13.*

10. ¶ And the princes offered for dedicating of the altar, in the day that it was anointed, even the princes offered their offering before the altar. 11. And the LORD said unto Moses, They shall offer their offering each prince on his day, for the dedicating of the altar. 12. ¶ And he that offered his offering the first day, was Nahshon the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah. 13. And his offering was one silver charger, the weight thereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them were full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering: 14. One spoon of ten shekels of gold, full of incense: 15. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt-offering: 16. One kid of the goats for a sin-offering: 17. And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab. 18. ¶ On the second day Nethaneel the son of Zuar, prince of Issachar, did offer. 19. He offered for his offering one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering: 20. One spoon of gold of ten shekels, full of incense: 21. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt-offering: 22. One kid of the goats

No. 10.

for a sin-offering: 23. And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Nethaneel the son of Zuar. 24. ¶ On the third day Eliab the son of Helon, prince of the children of Zebulun, did offer. 25. His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering: 26. One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: 27. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt-offering: 28. One kid of the goats, for a sin-offering: 29. And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Eliab the son of Helon. 30. ¶ On the fourth day Elizur the son of Shedeur, prince of the children of Reuben, did offer. 31. His offering was one silver charger, of an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering: 32. One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: 33. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt-offering. 34. One kid of the goats for a sin-offering: 35. And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Elizur, the son of Shedeur. 36. ¶ On the fifth day Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai, prince of the children of Simeon, did offer. 37. His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering: 38. One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: 39. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt-offering: 40. One kid of the goats for a sin-offering: 41. And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. 42. ¶ On the sixth day Eliafaph the son of Deuel, prince of the children of Gad, offered. 43. His offering was one silver charger, of the weight of an hundred and thirty shekels, a silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering: 44. One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: 45. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt-offering: 46. One kid of the goats for a sin-offering: 47. And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Eliafaph the son of Deuel. 48. ¶ On the seventh day Elishama the son of Ammihud, prince of the children of Ephraim, offered. 49. His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering: 50. One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: 51. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt-offering: 52. One kid of the goats for a sin-offering: 53. And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Elishama the son of Ammihud. 54. ¶ On the eighth day offered Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur, prince of the children of Manasseh. 55. His offering was one silver charger, of an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering: 56. One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: 57. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt-offering: 58. One kid of the goats for a sin-offering: 59. And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Gamaliel the son of

Pedahzur: 60. ¶ On the ninth day Abidan the son of Gideoni, prince of the children of Benjamin, *offered*. 61. His offering *was* one silver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *shekels*, a silver bowl of seventy *shekels* after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering: 62. One golden spoon of ten *shekels*, full of incense: 63. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt-offering: 64. One kid of the goats for a sin-offering: 65. And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This *was* the offering of Abidan the son of Gideoni. 66. ¶ On the tenth day Ahiezer the son of Amishaddai, prince of the children of Dan, *offered*. 67. His offering *was* one silver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy *shekels*, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering: 68. One golden spoon of ten *shekels*, full of incense: 69. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt-offering: 70. One kid of the goats for a sin-offering: 71. And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first-year. This *was* the offering of Ahiezer the son of Amishaddai. 72. ¶ On the eleventh day Pagiel the son of Ocran, prince of the children of Asher, *offered*. 73. His offering *was* one silver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy *shekels*, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering: 74. One golden spoon of ten *shekels*, full of incense: 75. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt-offering: 76. One kid of the goats for a sin-offering: 77. And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This *was* the offering of Pagiel the son of Ocran. 78. ¶ On the twelfth day Ahira the son of Enan, prince of the children of Naphtali, *offered*. 79. His offering *was* one silver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy *shekels* after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering: 80. One golden spoon of ten *shekels*, full of incense: 81. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt-offering: 82. One kid of the goats for a sin-offering: 83. And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This *was* the offering of Ahira the son of Enan. 84. This *was* the dedication of the altar (in the day when it was anointed) by the princes of Israel: twelve chargers of silver, twelve silver bowls, twelve spoons of gold: 85. Each charger of silver *weighing* an hundred and thirty *shekels*, each bowl seventy: all the silver vessels *weighed* two thousand and four hundred *shekels*, after the shekel of the sanctuary. 86. The golden spoons *were* twelve, full of incense, *weighing* ten *shekels* apiece, after the shekel of the sanctuary: all the gold of the spoons *was* an hundred and twenty *shekels*. 87. All the oxen for the burnt-offering *were* twelve bullocks, the rams twelve, the lambs of the first year twelve, with their meat-offering: and the kids of the goats for sin-offering, twelve. 88. And all the oxen for the sacrifice of the peace-offerings, *were* twenty and four bullocks, the rams sixty, the he-goats sixty, the lambs of the first year sixty. This *was* the dedication of the altar, after that it was anointed. 89. And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation, to speak with him; then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy-seat, that *was* upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubims: and he spake unto him.

We have here an account of the great solemnity of dedicating the altars, both that of burnt-offerings, and that of incense; they had been sanctified before, when they were anointed, *Lev. viii. 10, 11.* but now they were hallowed as it were by the princes, with their free-will offerings. They begun the use of them with

rich presents, and great expressions of joy and gladness, and extraordinary respect to those tokens of God's presence with them. Now observe here, 1. That the princes and great men were first and forwardest in the service of God. Those that are entitled to precedence, should go before in good works; and that is true honour. That is an example to the nobility and gentry, those that are in authority, and of the first rank in their country; they ought to improve their honour and power, their estate and interest, for the promoting of religion, and the service of God, in the places where they live. It is justly expected, that they that have more than others, should do more good than others, with what they have, else they are unfaithful stewards, and will not make up their *account with joy*. Nay, great men must not only with their wealth and power assist and protect those that do serve God, but they must make conscience of being devout and religious themselves, and employing themselves in the exercises of piety, which will greatly redound to the honour of God, (*Psal. cxxxviii. 4, 5.*) and have a mighty good influence upon others, who will be the easier persuaded to the acts of devotion, when they see them thus brought into reputation. It is certain, the greatest of men is less than the least of the ordinances of God; nor are the meanest services of religion any disparagement to those that make the greatest figure in the world. 2. The offerings they brought were very rich and valuable; so rich, that some think there was not so great a difference in estate between them and others, as that they were able to bear the expence of them themselves, but that the heads of each tribe contributed to the offering which their prince brought. 1. They brought some things to remain for standing service; twelve large silver dishes, each about sixty ounces weight; as many large silver cups, or bowls, of about thirty-five ounces; the former to be used for the meat-offerings, the latter for the drink-offerings; the former for the flesh of the sacrifices, the latter for the blood. The altar was God's table (as it were) and it was fit so great a king should be served in plate. The golden spoons being filled with incense, it is very likely were intended for the service of the golden altar, for both the altars were anointed at the same time. Note, In works of piety and charity, we ought to be generous according as our ability is. He that is the best, should be served with the best we have. The Israelites indeed might well afford to part with their gold and silver in abundance to the service of the sanctuary, for they needed it not to buy meat, and victual their camp, who were daily fed with bread from heaven; nor did they need it to buy bread, or pay their army, who were shortly to be put in possession of Canaan. 2. They brought some things to be used immediately, offerings of each sort, burnt-offerings, sin-offerings, and a great many peace-offerings, on part of which they were to feast with their friends; and the meat-offerings that were to be annexed to them. Hereby they signified their thankful acceptance of, and cheerful submission to, all those laws concerning the sacrifices, which God had lately by Moses delivered to them. And though it was a time of joy and rejoicing, yet it is observable, that still in the midst of their sacrifices we find a sin-offering; since in our best services we are conscious to our selves that there is a mixture of sin, it is fit there should be even in our most joyful services a mixture of repentance. In all our approaches to God, we must by faith have an eye to Christ as the great sin-offering, and make mention of him. 3. They brought their offerings each on a several day, in the order that they had lately been put into, so that the solemnity lasted twelve days. So God appointed, *ver. 11. They shall bring their offering each prince on his day*, and so they did. One sabbath must needs fall within the twelve days, if not two, but it should seem they did not intermit on the sabbath, for it was holy work, proper enough for a holy day. God appointed that it should thus be done on several days; (1.) That the solemnity might be prolonged, and so might be universally taken notice of by all Israel, and the remembrance of it more effectually preserved. (2.) That an equal honour might thereby be put upon each several tribe; in Aaron's priest-plate each had his precious stone, so in this offering each had his day. (3.) Thus it would be done more decently and in order; God's work should not be done confusedly, and in a hurry; take time, and we shall have done the sooner; or at least, we shall have done the better. (4.) God hereby signified how well pleased he is, and how well pleased we should be, with the exercises of piety and devotion. The repetition of them should be a continued pleasure to us, and we must not be weary of well-doing. If extraordinary services come to be done for twelve days together, we must not snuff at it, nor call it a task and a burthen. (5.) The priests and Levites having this occasion to offer the same sacrifices, and those some of every sort, every day, for so many days together, would have their hands well set in, and would be well versed in the laws concerning them. (6.) The peace-offerings were all to be eaten the same day they were offered, and two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, and five lambs, were enough for one day's festival; had there been more, especially if all had been brought of a day, there might have been danger of excess. The virtue of temperance must not be left under pretence of the religion of feasting. 4. All their offerings were exactly the same, without any variation, though

though it is probable the princes were not all alike rich, nor the tribes neither; but thus it was intimated, that all the tribes of Israel had an equal share in the altar, and an equal interest in the sacrifices that were offered upon it. Though one tribe was posted more honourably in the camp than another, yet they and their services were all alike acceptable to God. Nor must we have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ *with respect of persons*, Jam. ii. 1. 5. Nahshon the prince of the tribe of Judah offered first, because God had given that tribe the first post of honour in the camp; and the rest of the tribes acquiesced, and offered in the same order that God had appointed them to encamp. Judah, of which tribe Christ came, first, and then the rest; thus in the dedication of souls to God, every man is presented in his own order, *Christ the first-fruits*, 1 Cor. xv. 23. Some observe that Nahshon is the only one that is not expressly called a prince, ver. 12. which the Jews give this account of; he is not called a prince, that he might not be puffed up because he offered first; and all the other are called princes, because they (though some of them of the elder house) submitted, and offered after him. Or, because the title of prince of Judah did more properly belong to Christ, for *unto him shall the gathering of the people be*. 6. Though the offerings were all the same, yet the account of them is repeated at large for each tribe, in the same words. We are sure there are no vain repetitions in scripture, what then shall we make of these repetitions? Might it not have served to say of this noble jury, that the same offering which their foreman brought, each on his day brought likewise? No, God would have it specified for each tribe: and why so? (1.) It was for the encouragement of these princes, and of their respective tribes, that each of their offerings being recorded at large, no slight might seem to be put upon any of them, for rich and poor meet together before God. (2.) It was for the encouragement of all generous acts of piety and charity, by letting us know that what is so given is lent to the Lord, and he carefully books it, with every one's name prefixed to his gift, because what is so given he will pay it again, and even a *cup of cold water* shall have its reward. He is not unrighteous, to forget either the cost or labour of love, Heb. vi. 10. We find Christ taking particular notice of what was cast into the treasury, Mark xii. 41. Though what is offered be but little, while it is according to our ability, though it be a contribution to the charity of others, yet it shall be recorded, that it may be recompensed in the resurrection of the just. 7. The sum total is added at the foot of the account, ver. 84—88. to shew how well pleased God was with the mention of his free-will offerings; and what a great deal it amounted to in the whole, when every prince brought in his quota; how greatly would the sanctuary of God be enriched and beautified, if all would in their places do their part towards it, by exemplary purity and devotion, extensive charity, and universal usefulness! 8. God signified his gracious acceptance of these presents that were brought him, by speaking familiarly to Moses as a man speaks to his friend, from off the mercy-seat, ver. 89. Numb. xii. 8. and in speaking to him, he did in effect speak to all Israel, shewing them this *token for good*, Psal. ciii. 7. Note, By this we may know that God hears and accepts our prayers, if he gives us grace to hear and receive his word, for thus our communion with him is maintained and kept up. I know not why we may not suppose that upon each of the days on which these offerings were brought, probably while the priests and offerers were feasting upon the peace-offerings, Moses was in the tabernacle receiving some of these laws and orders, which we have already met with in this and the foregoing book. And here the excellent bishop Patrick observes, that God's speaking to Moses thus by an audible articulate voice, as if he had been clothed with a body, might be looked upon as an earnest of the incarnation of the Son of God in the fulness of time, when the Word should be made flesh, and speak in the language of the sons of men. For however *God at sundry times and in divers manners spake unto the fathers, he has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son*. And that he that now spake to Moses, as the *Schechinah*, or divine majesty from between the cherubims, was the eternal word, the second person in the Trinity, was the pious conjecture of many of the ancients; for all God's communion with man is by his Son, by whom he made the world, and rules the church, and who is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever.

C H A P. VIII.

This chapter is concerning the lamps or lights of the sanctuary, 1. The burning lamps in the candlestick, which the priests were charged to tend, ver. 1—4. 2. The living lamps, (if I may so call them) the Levites, who as ministers were burning and shining lights. The ordination of the priests we had an account of, Lev. 8. Here of the ordination of the Levites, the inferior clergy. (1.) How they were purified, ver. 5—8. 2. How they were parted with by the people, ver. 9, 10. 3. How they were presented to God in lieu of the first-born, ver. 11—18. 4. How they were consigned to Aaron and his sons, to be ministers to them, ver. 19. And how all these orders were duly exe-

cuted, ver. 20—22. And lastly, the age appointed for their ministration, ver. 23—26.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him, When thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick. 3. And Aaron did so; he lighted the lamps thereof, over against the candlestick; as the LORD commanded Moses. 4. And this work of the candlestick was of beaten gold, unto the shaft thereof, unto the flowers thereof, was beaten work: according unto the pattern which the LORD had shewed Moses, so he made the candlestick.

Directions were given long before this for the making of the golden candlestick, *Exod. xxv. 31.* and it was made according to the pattern shewed to Moses in the mount, *Exod. xxxvii. 17.* But now it was that the lamps were first ordered to be lighted, when other things began to be used. Observe, 1. Who must light the lamps, Aaron himself, he *lighted the lamps*, ver. 3. As the peoples representative to God, he thus did the office of a servant in God's house, lighting his master's candle; as the representative of God to the people, he thus gave them the significations of God's will and favour, which is thus expressed, *Psal. xviii. 28. Thou wilt light my candle*; and thus Aaron himself was now lately directed to bless the people, *The Lord make his face shine upon thee*, chap. vi. 25. The commandment is a lamp, *Prov. vi. 23.* The scripture is a light shining in a dark place, 2 Pet. i. 19. And a dark place indeed even the church would be without it, as the tabernacle without the lamps, for it had no window in it. Now the work of ministers is to light these lamps, by expounding and applying the word of God. The priest lighted the middle lamp from the fire of the altar, and the rest of the lamps he lighted one from another, which (saith Mr. Ainsworth) signifieth that the fountain of all light and knowledge cometh from Christ, who has the *seven spirits of God* figured by the *seven lamps of fire*, Rev. iv. 5. But that in the expounding of scripture, one passage must borrow light from another. He also supposeth, that *seven* being a number of perfection, by the seven branches of the candlestick is shewed the full perfection of the scriptures, which are able to make us wise to salvation. 2. To what end the lamps were lighted, that they might give light over against the candlestick, i. e. to that part of the tabernacle where the table stood, with the shew-bread upon it over against the candlestick. They were not lighted like tapers in an urn, to burn to themselves, but to give light to the other side of the tabernacle, for therefore candles are lighted, *Matt. v. 15.* Note, The lights of the world, the lights of the church must shine as lights. Therefore we have light, that we may give light.

5. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 6. Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them. 7. And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: Sprinkle water of purifying upon them, and let them shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean. 8. Then let them take a young bullock with his meat-offering, even fine flour mingled with oil, and another young bullock shalt thou take for a sin-offering. 9. And thou shalt bring the Levites before the tabernacle of the congregation; and thou shalt gather the whole assembly, of the children of Israel together: 10. And thou shalt bring the Levites before the LORD, and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites: 11. And Aaron shall offer the Levites before the LORD, for an offering of the children of Israel; that they may execute the service of the LORD. 12. And the Levites shall lay their hands upon the heads of the bullocks; and thou shalt offer the one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering unto the LORD, to make an atonement for the Levites. 13. And thou shalt set the Levites before Aaron, and before his sons, and offer them for an offering unto the LORD. 14. Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel: and the Levites shall be mine. 15. And after that, shall the Levites go in, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt cleanse them, and offer them for an offering. 16. For they are wholly given unto me, from among the children of Israel; instead of such as open every womb, even instead of the first-born of all the children of Israel, have I taken them unto me. 17. For all the first-born of the children of Israel are mine, both man and beast: on the day that

I smote every first-born in the land of Egypt, I sanctified them for my self. 18. And I have taken the Levites for all the first-born of the children of Israel. 19. And I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and to his sons, from among the children of Israel; to do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation, and to make an atonement for the children of Israel: that there be no plague among the children of Israel, when the children of Israel come nigh unto the sanctuary. 20. And Moses and Aaron, and all the congregation of the children of Israel did to the Levites according unto all that the LORD commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did the children of Israel unto them. 21. And the Levites were purified, and they washed their clothes: and Aaron offered them as an offering before the LORD; and Aaron made an atonement for them to cleanse them. 22. And after that went the Levites in, to do their service in the tabernacle of the congregation before Aaron and before his sons: as the LORD had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did they unto them. 23. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 24. This is it that *belongeth* unto the Levites: from twenty and five years old and upward; they shall go in to wait upon the service of the tabernacle of the congregation: 25. And from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the service *thereof*, and shall serve no more: 26. But shall minister with their brethren in the tabernacle of the congregation, to keep the charge, and shall do no service: Thus shalt thou do unto the Levites touching their charge.

We read before of the separating of the Levites from among the children of Israel, when they were numbred, and the numbring of them by themselves, *chap. iii. 6, 15.* that they might be employed in the service of the tabernacle. Now here we have directions given for their solemn ordination, *ver. 6.* and the performance of it, *ver. 20.* All Israel must know that they took not this honour to themselves, but were called of God to it; nor was it enough that they were distinguished from their neighbours, but they must be solemnly devoted to God. Note, All that are employed for God must be dedicated to him, according as the degree of the employment is. Christians must be baptized, ministers must be ordained; we must first give our own selves unto the Lord, and then our services. Observe in what method this was done: 1. The Levites must be cleansed, and were so. The rites and ceremonies of their cleansing were to be performed, (1.) By themselves. They must *wash their clothes*, and not only bathe but *shave all their flesh*, as the leper was to do when he was cleansed, *Lev. xiv. 8.* They must *cause a razor to pass over all their flesh*, to clear themselves from that defilement which would not wash off. Jacob whom God loved was a smooth man, it was Esau that was hairy. The great pains they were to take with themselves to make themselves clean, teacheth all christians, and ministers particularly, by repentance and mortification, to *cleanse themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit*, that they may *perfect holiness*. They must be clean that bear the vessels of the Lord. (2.) By Moses. He must *sprinkle the water of purifying upon them*, which was prepared by divine direction. This signified the application of the blood of Christ to our souls by faith, for the purifying of us from an evil conscience; that we may be fit to serve the living God. It is our duty to cleanse our selves, and God's promise that he will cleanse us. 2. The Levites being thus prepared, must be brought before the Lord, in a solemn assembly of all Israel, and the children of Israel must *put their hands upon them*, *ver. 10.* So transferring their interest in them, and in their service, (to which, as of a part, the whole body of the people was intitled) to God and to his sanctuary. They presented them to God as *living sacrifices, holy and acceptable*, to perform a *reasonable service*, and therefore as the offerers in all other cases did, they *laid their hands upon them*, desiring that their service might be accepted in lieu of the attendance of the whole congregation, particularly the first-born, which they acknowledge God might have insisted on. This will not serve to prove a power in the people to ordain ministers; for this imposition of hands by the children of Israel upon the Levites did not make them ministers of the sanctuary, but only signified the peoples parting with that tribe out of their militia, and civil incorporations, in order to their being made ministers by Aaron, who was to offer them before the Lord. All the congregation of the children of Israel could not lay hands on them, but it is probable the rulers and elders did it as the representative body of the people. Some think the first-born did it, because in their stead the Levites were consecrated to God. Whatever God calls for from us to serve his own glory by, we must cheerfully resign

it; lay our hands upon it not to detain it, but to surrender it, and let it go to him that is entitled to it. 3. Sacrifices were to be offered for them; a sin-offering first, *ver. 12.* and then a burnt-offering to make an *atonement for the Levites*, who as the parties concerned were to lay their hands upon the head of the sacrifices. See here, (1.) That we are all utterly unworthy and unfit to be admitted into, and employed in the service of God, till atonement be made for sin, and thereby our peace made with God. That interposing cloud must be scattered, before there can be any comfortable communion settled between God and our souls. (2.) That it is by sacrifice, by Christ the great sacrifice, that we are reconciled to God, and made fit to be offered to him. It is by him that Christians are sanctified to the work of their christianity, and ministers to the work of their ministry. The learned bishop Patrick's notion of this sacrifice offered by the Levites is, that the Levites were themselves considered as an expiatory sacrifice, for they were given to *make atonement for the children of Israel*, *ver. 19.* And yet not being devoted to death, no more than the first-born were, these two sacrifices were substituted in their stead, upon which therefore they were to lay their hands, that their sin which the children of Israel laid upon them, *ver. 10.* might be transferred to these beasts. 4. The Levites themselves were *offered before the Lord* for an *offering of the children of Israel*, *ver. 11.* Aaron gave them up to God, as being first given up by themselves, and by the children of Israel. The original word signifies a wave-offering, not that they were actually waved, but they were presented to God as the God of heaven, and the Lord of the whole earth, as the wave-offerings were. And in calling them wave-offerings, it was intimated to them, that they must continually lift up themselves towards God in his service, lift up their eyes, lift up their hearts, and must move to and fro with readiness in the business of their profession. They were not ordained to be idle, but to be active and stirring. 5. God here declares his acceptance of them, *ver. 14. The Levites shall be mine.* God took them instead of the first-born, *ver. 16, 17, 18.* of which before, *chap. iii. 41.* Note, What is in sincerity offered to God, shall be graciously owned and accepted by him. And his ministers who have obtained mercy of him to be faithful, have particular marks of favour and honour put upon them; they shall be mine, and then, *ver. 15.* they shall *go in to do the service of the tabernacle*. God takes them for his own, that they might serve him. All that expect to share in the privileges of the tabernacle, must resolve to do the service of the tabernacle. As on the one hand, none of God's creatures are his necessary servants, he needs not the service of any of them; so on the other hand, none are taken merely as honorary servants, to do nothing. All whom God owns he employs, angels themselves have their services. 6. They are then given as a gift to Aaron and his sons, *ver. 19.* yet so as that the benefit accrued to the children of Israel. (1.) The Levites must act under the priests, as attendants on them, and assistants to them, in the service of the sanctuary. Aaron offers them to God, *ver. 11.* and then God gives them back to Aaron, *ver. 19.* Note, Whatever we give up to God, he will give it back to us unspeakably to our advantage. Our hearts, our children, our estates, are never more ours, more truly, more comfortably ours, than when we have offered them up to God. (2.) They must act for the people. They were taken to *do the service of the children of Israel*, *i. e.* not only to do the service which they should do, but to serve their interests, and do that which would really redound to the honour, safety, and prosperity of the whole nation. Note, They that faithfully perform the service of God, do one of the best services that can be done to the publick; God's ministers, while they keep within the sphere of their office, and conscientiously discharge the duty of it, must be looked upon as some of the most useful servants of their country. The children of Israel can as ill spare the tribe of Levi as any of their tribes. But what is the service they do the children of Israel? It follows, it is to *make an atonement for them*, *that there be no plague among them.* It was the priests work to make atonement by sacrifice, but the Levites made atonement by attendance, and preserved the peace with heaven, which was made by sacrifice. If the service of the priests in the tabernacle had been left to all the first-born of Israel promiscuously, either it would have been neglected, or done unskillfully and irreverently, being done by those that were neither so closely tied to it, nor so diligently trained up to it, nor so constantly used to it, as the Levites were; and this would bring a *plague among the children of Israel*, meaning perhaps the death of the first-born themselves, which was the last and greatest of the plagues of Egypt. To prevent this, and to preserve the atonement, the Levites were appointed to do this service, who should be bred up to it under their parents from their infancy, and therefore would be well versed in it: and so the children of Israel, *i. e.* the first-born should not need to come nigh to the sanctuary; or, when any Israelites had occasion, the Levites would be ready to instruct them, and introduce them, and so prevent any fatal miscarriage or mistake. Note, It is a very great kindness to the church, that ministers are appointed to go before them in the things of God,

God, as guides, overseers, and rulers, in religious worship, and to make that their business. When Christ ascended on high he gave these gifts, Eph. iv. 8, 11, 12. 7. The time of their ministration is fixed. (1.) They were to enter upon the service at twenty-five years old, *ver. 24.* They were not charged with the carrying of the tabernacle, and the utensils of it till they were thirty years old, *chap. iv. 3.* But they were entered to be otherways serviceable at twenty-five years old; a very good age for ministers to begin their publick work at. The work then requir'd that strength of body, and the work now requires that maturity of judgment, and stayedness of behaviour, which men rarely arrive at till about that age: and novices are in danger of being lifted up with pride. (2.) They were to have a writ of ease at fifty years old; then they were to return from the warfare, as the phrase is, *ver. 25.* not cashiered with disgrace, but preferred rather to the rest which their age required, to be loaded with the honours of their office, as hitherto they had been with the burthens of it. They shall minister with their brethren in the tabernacle, to direct the junior Levites, and set them in, and they shall keep the charge, as guards upon the avenues of the tabernacle, to see that no stranger intruded, nor any person in his uncleanness, but they shall not be put upon any service, which may be a fatigue to them. If God's grace provide that men shall have ability according to their work, man's prudence should take care, that men have work but according to their ability. The aged are most fit for trusts, and to keep the charge, the younger are most fit for work, and to do the service. Those that have used the office of a servant well, purchase to themselves a good degree, 1 Tim. iii. 13. Yet indeed gifts are not tied to ages, Job xxxii. 9. but all these worketh, that one and the self same Spirit. Thus was the affair of the Levites settled.

C H A P. IX.

This chapter is, 1. Concerning the great ordinance of the passover; (1.) Orders given for the observance of it, at the return of the year, *ver. 1—5.* (2.) Proviso's added, what should be done with those that were ceremonially unclean, or otherwise disabled, at the time when the passover was to be kept, *ver. 6—14.* 2. Concerning the great favour of the pillar of cloud; which was a guide to Israel through the wilderness, *ver. 15—23.*

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year, after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying, 2. Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his appointed season, 3. In the fourteenth day of this month at even, ye shall keep it in his appointed season: according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof shall ye keep it. 4. And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, that they should keep the passover. 5. And they kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month at even, in the wilderness of Sinai: according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel. 6. ¶ And there were certain men who were defiled by the dead body of a man, that they could not keep the passover on that day: and they came before Moses, and before Aaron on that day. 7. And those men said unto him, We are defiled by the dead body of a man: wherefore are we kept back, that we may not offer an offering of the LORD in his appointed season, among the children of Israel? 8. And Moses said unto them, Stand still, and I will hear what the LORD will command concerning you. 9. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 10. Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any man of you, or of your posterity shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or be in a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the passover unto the LORD. 11. The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it, and eat it with unleavened bread, and bitter herbs. 12. They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the passover, they shall keep it. 13. But the man that is clean, and is not in a journey, and forbeareth to keep the passover; even the same soul shall be cut off from his people, because he brought not the offering of the LORD in his appointed season: that man shall bear his sin. 14. And if a stranger shall sojourn among you, and will keep the passover unto the LORD, according to the ordinance of the passover, and according to the manner thereof, so shall he do: ye shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger, and for him that was born in the land.

Here is, 1. An order given for the solemnizing of the passover, that day twelve-month after they came out of Egypt, on the fourteenth day of the first month of the second year, some days before they were numbred, for that was done in the beginning of the second month. Observe, (1.) God gave particular orders for the keeping of this passover; otherwise (it should seem) they had not kept it, for in the first institution of this ordinance it was appointed to be kept when they should come into the land of promise, Exod. xii. 25. And for ought appears, after this they kept no passover till they came to Canaan, Josh. v. 10. This was an early indication of the abolishing of the ceremonial institutions at last, that so soon after they were first appointed, some of them were suffered to lie asleep for so many years. The ordinance of the Lord's supper (which came in the room of the passover) was not thus intermitted or set aside, in the first days of the Christian church, though those were days of greater difficulty and distress than Israel knew in the wilderness; nay, in the times of persecution the Lord's supper was celebrated more frequently than afterwards. The Israelites in the wilderness could not forget their deliverance out of Egypt, their present state was a constant memorandum of it to them, all the danger was when they came to Canaan, there therefore they had need to be minded of the rock out of which they were hewn. However, because the first passover was celebrated in a hurry, and was rather the substance it self than the sign, it was the will of God that at the return of the year, when they were more composed, and better acquainted with the divine law, they should observe it again, that their children might more distinctly understand the solemnity, and the better remember it hereafter. Calvin supposeth they were obliged to keep it now, and notes it as an instance of their carelessness, that they had need to be minded of an institution they so lately received. (2.) Moses faithfully transmitted to the people the orders given him, *ver. 4.* Thus St. Paul delivered to the churches what he received of the Lord concerning the gospel passover, 1 Cor. xi. 23. Note, Magistrates must be monitors, and ministers must stir up mens minds by way of remembrance to that which is good. (3.) The people observed the orders given them, *ver. 5.* Though they had lately kept the feast of dedication, Lev. viii. yet they did not desire to excuse themselves with that from keeping this feast. Note, Extraordinary performances must not supersede or jumble out our stated services. They kept the passover even in the wilderness; though our condition be solitary and unsettled, yet we must keep up our attendance on God by holy ordinances and opportunity, for in them we may find the best conversation, and the best repose. Thus is God's Israel provided for in a desert. 2. Instructions given concerning those that were ceremonially unclean, when they were to eat the passover. The law of the passover required every Israelite to eat of it; some subsequent laws had forbidden those that had contracted any ceremonial pollution to eat of the holy things; those whose minds and consciences are defiled by sin, are utterly unfit for communion with God, and cannot partake of any true comfort in the gospel passover, till they are cleansed by true repentance and faith: and a sad dilemma they are in; if they come not to holy ordinances, they are guilty of a contempt of them; if they do come in their pollution, they are guilty of a profanation of them. They must therefore wash, and then compass God's altar. Now, 1. Here is the case that happened in Israel when this passover was to be kept. Certain men were defiled by the dead body of a man, *ver. 6.* and they lay under that defilement seven days, Numb. xix. 11. and in that time might not eat of the holy things, Lev. vii. 20. This was not their iniquity but their infelicity; some or other must touch dead bodies, to bury them out of sight, and therefore they could with the better grace bring their complaint to Moses. 2. The application made to Moses by the persons concerned, *ver. 7.* Note, It is peoples wisdom in difficult cases concerning sin and duty, to consult with their ministers whom God has set over them, and to ask the law at their mouth, Mal. ii. 7. These means we must use in pursuance of our prayers to God to lead us in a plain path. It is observable, with what trouble and concern these men complain, that they were kept back from offering to the Lord. They did not complain of the law as unjust, but lamented their unhappiness, that they fell under the restraint of it at this time, and desired some expedient might be found out for their relief. Note, It is a blessed sight to see people hungry and thirsting after God's ordinances, and to hear them complaining of that which prevents their enjoyment of them. It should be a trouble to us, when by any occasion we are kept back from bringing our offering, in the solemnities of a sabbath or a sacrament, as it was to David, when he was banished from the altar, Psal. xlii. 1, 2. 3. The deliberation of Moses in resolving this case: here seemed to be law against law, and though it is a rule that the latter law must explain the former, yet he pitied these Israelites, that were thus debarred the privilege of the passover; and therefore took time to consult the oracles, and to know what was the mind of God in this case, *ver. 8.* I will hear what the Lord will command concerning you. Ministers must take example from hence in resolving cases of conscience. (1.) They must not determine rashly, but take time to consider, that every circumstance may be duly weighed, the case viewed in a true light, and

and spiritual things compared with spiritual. (2.) They must ask counsel at God's mouth, and not determine according to the bias of their own fancy or affection, but impartially according to the mind of God, to the best of their knowledge. We have now no such oracle to consult as Moses had, but we must have recourse to *the law and the testimony*, and speak according to that rule; and if in difficult cases, we take time to spread the matter in particular before God, by a humble believing prayer, we have reason to hope that Spirit which is promised to *lead us into all truth*, shall direct us to direct others *in the good and the right way*. 4. The directions which God gave in this case, and in other the like cases, explanatory of the law of the passover. This ill accident produced good laws. 1. Those that happened to be ceremonially unclean at the time when the passover should be eaten, were allowed to eat it that day month when they were clean; so were those that happened to be *in a journey, afar off*, ver. 10, 11. See here, (1.) That when we are to attend upon God in solemn ordinances, it is very necessary both that we be clean, and that we be composed. (2.) That that may excuse the deferring of a duty for a time, which yet will not justify us in the total neglect and omission of it. He that is at variance with his brother may *leave his gift before the altar*, while he goes to be *reconciled to his brother*; but when he has done his part towards it, whether it be effected or no, he must *come again, and offer his gift*, Matt. v. 23, 24. This secondary passover was to be kept on the same day of the month with the first, because the ordinance was a memorial of their deliverance on that day of the month. Once we find the whole congregation keeping the passover, on this fourteenth day of the second month, in Hezekiah's time, 2 Chron. xxx. 15. which perhaps may help to account for the admission of some that were not clean to the eating of it; had the general passover been kept in the first month, the unclean might have been put off till the second; but that being kept in the second month, they had no warrant to eat it in the third month; and therefore rather than not eat of it at all, they were admitted though not cleansed *according to the purification of the sanctuary*, ver. 19, 20. 2. When the passover was eating in the second month, all the rites and ceremonies of it must be strictly observed, ver. 12. They must not think, that, because the time was dispensed with, any part of the solemnity of it might be abated; no, when we cannot do as we would, we must do the utmost we can in, the service of God. 3. This allowance in a case of necessity should by no means countenance or indulge any in their neglect to keep the passover at the time appointed, when they were not under that necessity, ver. 13. He that is under no incapacity to eat the passover in the appointed time, if he neglected it then upon the presumption of the liberty granted by this law, he puts an affront upon God, impiously abuseth his kindness, and he shall certainly *bear his sin, and be cut off from his people*. Note, As those who against their minds, are forced to absent from God's ordinances, may comfortably expect the favours of God's grace under their affliction; so those who of choice absent themselves, may justly expect the tokens of God's wrath for their sin. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked*. 4. Here is a clause added in favour of strangers, ver. 14. Though it was requisite that the stranger who would join with them in eating the passover should be circumcised, as a profelyte to their religion, Exod. xii. 48, 49. yet this kind admission of those that were not native Israelites to eat the passover, was an intimation of the favour designed for the poor Gentiles by Christ. As then there was one law, so in the days of the Messiah there should be one gospel, for the stranger, and for him that was born in the land; *for in every nation, he that fears God, and works righteousness, is accepted of him*, and this was a truth before Peter perceived it, Acts x. 34, 35.

15. ¶ And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, *namely*, the tent of the testimony: and at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning. 16. So it was alway: the cloud covered it *by day*, and the appearance of fire by night. 17. And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle; then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents. 18. At the commandment of the LORD the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the LORD they pitched: as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle, they rested in the tents. 19. And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the LORD, and journeyed not. 20. And so it was when the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle; according to the commandment of the LORD they abode in their tents, and according to the commandment of the LORD they journeyed. 21. And so it was when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and *that* the cloud was taken up in the morn-

ing, then they journeyed: whether *it was* by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed. 22. Or *whether it were* two days, or a month, or a year that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not: but when it was taken up they journeyed. 23. At the commandment of the LORD they rested in the tents, and at the commandment of the LORD they journeyed: they kept the charge of the LORD at the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

We have here the history of the cloud; not a natural history, *who knows the balancings of the clouds?* but a divine history, of a cloud that was appointed to be the visible sign and symbol of God's presence with Israel. 1. When the tabernacle was finished, this cloud, which before had hung on high over their camp, settled upon the tabernacle, and covered it, to shew that God manifested his presence with his people, in and by his ordinances; there he makes himself known, and to them we must look, if we would *see the beauty of the Lord*, Ezek. xxxvii. 26, 27. Thus God owned his own appointments, and signified his acceptance of his peoples love and obedience. 2. That which appeared as a cloud by day, appeared as a fire all night; had it been a cloud only, it had not been visible by night; and had it been a fire only, it would have been scarce discernible by day; but God would give them sensible demonstrations of the constancy of his presence with them, and his care of them, and that he *kept them night and day*, Isa. xxvii. 5. Psalm cxxi. 6. And thus we are taught to *set God always before us*, and to see him near us both night and day. Something of the nature of that divine revelation which the Old Testament church was governed by, might also be signified by these visible signs of God's presence, the cloud noting the darkness, and the fire the terror of that dispensation, in comparison with the more clear and comfortable discoveries God has made of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ. 3. This pillar of cloud and fire directed and determined all the motions, marches and encampments of Israel in the wilderness. (1.) As long as the cloud rested upon the tabernacle, so long they continued in the same place, and never stirred; though no doubt they were very desirous to be pressing forward in their journey towards Canaan, where they longed to be and hoped to be quickly, yet as long as the cloud rested, if it were a month, or a year, so long they rested, ver. 22. Note, He that believeth doth not make haste. There is no time lost, while we are waiting God's time. It is as acceptable a piece of submission to the will of God to sit still contentedly, when our lot requires it, as to work for him when we are called to it. (2.) When the cloud was taken up, they removed, how comfortably soever they were encamped, ver. 17. Whether it moved by day or night, they delayed not to attend its motions, ver. 21. and probably, there were some appointed to stand sentinel day and night within ken of it, to give timely notice to the camp of its beginning to stir, and this is called keeping the charge of the Lord. The people being thus kept at a constant uncertainty, and having no time fixt for their staid and removes, were obliged to hold themselves in a constant readiness to march upon very short warning. And for the same reason we are kept at uncertainty, concerning the time of our putting off the earthly house of this tabernacle, that we may be always ready to *remove, at the commandment of the Lord*. (3.) As long and as far as the cloud moved, so long and so far they marched, and just there where it abode, they pitched their tents about it, and God's tent under it, ver. 17. Note, It is uncomfortable staying when God is departed, but very safe and pleasant going, when we see God go before us, and resting where he appoints us to rest. This is repeated again and again in these verses, because it was a constant miracle, and oft repeated, and what never failed in all their travels, and because it is a matter which we should take particular notice of as very significant and instructive. It is mentioned long after by David, Psalm cv. 39. and by the people of God after their captivity, Neh. ix. 19. And the conduct of this cloud is spoken of as signifying the guidance of the blessed Spirit, Isa. lxiii. 14. *The Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest, and so didst thou lead thy people*.

This teacheth us, 1. The particular care God takes of his people. Nothing could be more expressive and significant of God's tenderness of Israel, than the conduct of this cloud was; it led them by the *right way*, Psalm cvii. 7. went on their pace: God did by it as it were cover them with his feathers. We are not now to expect such sensible tokens of the divine presence and guidance as this was, but the promise is sure to all God's spiritual Israel, that he will *guide them by his counsel*, Psalm lxxii. 24. *even unto death*, Psalm xlviii. 14. That all the *children of God* shall be *led by the Spirit of God*, Rom. viii. 14. That he will *direct their paths*, who in all their ways *acknowledge him*, Prov. iii. 6. There is a particular providence conversant about all their affairs, to direct and over-rule them for the best: *The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord*, Psalm xxxvii. 23. 2. The particular

particular regard we ought to have to God in all our ways. In our affections and actions we must follow the direction of his word and Spirit; all the motions of our soul must be guided by the divine will; at the commandment of the Lord our heart should always move and rest; in all our affairs we must follow providence, reconciling our selves to all its disposals, and bringing our mind to our condition, whatever it is. The people of Israel having the cloud for their conduct, were eased of the trouble of holding councils of war, to consider when and whither they should march, which might have occasioned strifes and debates among them: nor needed they to send spies before to inform them of the posture of the country, or pioneers to clear the way, or officers to mark out their camp; the pillar of cloud did all this for them: and those that by faith commit their works unto the Lord, though they are bound to the prudent use of means, yet may in like manner be easy in the expectation of the event; *Father, thy will be done*; dispose of me and mine as thou plearest; here I am, desirous to be found *waiting on my God continually*, to journey and rest at the commandment of the Lord. What thou wilt, and where thou wilt, only let me be thine, and always in the way of my duty.

C H A P. X.

In this chapter we have, 1. Orders given about the making and using of silver trumpets, which seems to have been the last of all the commandments God gave upon mount Sinai, and one of the least, yet not without its significancy, ver. 1—10. 2. The history of the removal of Israel's camp from mount Sinai, and their orderly march into the wilderness of Paran, ver. 11—28. 3. Moses's treaty with Hobab, his brother-in-law, ver. 29—32. 4. Moses's prayer at the removing and resting of the ark, ver. 33—36.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Make thee two trumpets of silver; of an whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps. 3. And when they shall blow with them, all the assembly shall assemble themselves to thee, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 4. And if they blow but with one trumpet, then the princes which are heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee. 5. When ye blow an alarm, then the camps that lie on the east-parts, shall go forward. 6. When ye blow an alarm the second time, then the camps that lie on the south-side shall take their journey: they shall blow an alarm for their journies. 7. But when the congregation is to be gathered together; you shall blow, but you shall not sound an alarm. 8. And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets; and they shall be to you for an ordinance for ever throughout your generations. 9. And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the LORD your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies. 10. Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginning of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt-offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace-offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I am the LORD your God.

We have here directions concerning the publick notices that were to be given to the people upon several occasions by sound of trumpet. In a thing of this nature one would think Moses needed not to have been taught of God, his own reason might teach him the conveniency of trumpets; but their constitution was to be in every thing divine, and therefore even in this matter, as small as it seems. Moses is here directed, 1. About the making of them. They must be made of silver, not cast, but of beaten work, (as some read it) the matter and shape no doubt very fit for the purpose. He was now ordered to make but two, because there were but two priests to use them. But in Solomon's time we read of *a hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets*, 2 Chron. v. 12. The form of these trumpets is supposed to be much like ours at this day. 2. Who were to make use of them, not any inferior person, but the priests themselves, the sons of Aaron, ver. 8. As great as they were, they must not think it a disparagement to them to be trumpeters in the house of God; the meanest office there was honourable. This signified, that the Lord's ministers should lift up their voice like a trumpet, to shew people their sins, Isa. lviii. 1. and to call them to Christ, Isa. xxvii. 13. 3. Upon what occasions the trumpets were to be sounded. 1. For the calling of assemblies, ver. 2. Thus they are bid to blow the trumpet in Zion, for the calling of a solemn assembly together, to sanctify a fast, Joel ii. 13. Publick notice

ought to be given of the time and place of religious assemblies, for the invitation to the benefit of ordinances is general, *whoever will let him come*. Wisdom cries in the chief places of concourse. But that the trumpet might not give an uncertain sound, they are directed, if only the princes and elders were to meet, to blow only one of the trumpets; less should serve to call them together, who ought to be examples of forwardness in any thing that is good: but if the body of the people were to be called together, both the trumpets must be sounded, that they might be the further heard. In allusion to this, they are said to be blessed that *hear the joyful sound*, Psal. lxxxix. 15. i. e. that are invited, and called upon, to wait upon God in publick ordinances, Psal. cxxii. 1. And the general assembly at the great day will be summoned by the sound of the archangel's trumpet, Matt. xxiv. 31. 2. For the journeying of the camps. To give notice when each squadron must move, for no man's voice could reach to give the word of command; soldiers with us that are well disciplined may be exercised by beat of drums. When the trumpets were blown for this purpose, they must sound an alarm, ver. 5. a broken, quavering, interrupted sound, which was proper to excite and encourage the minds of people in their marches against their enemies; whereas a continued equal sound was more proper for the calling of the assembly together, ver. 7. yet when the people were called together to deprecate God's judgments, we find an alarm sounded, Joel ii. 3. At the first sounding Judah's squadron marched, at the second Reuben's, at the third Ephraim's, at the fourth Dan's, ver. 5, 6. And some think this was intended to sanctify their marches, for thus was proclaimed by the priests, who were God's mouth to the people, not only the divine orders given them to move, but the divine blessing upon them in all their motions. He that hath ears let him hear, that *God is with them of a truth*. King Abijah valued himself and his army very much upon this, 2 Chron. xiii. 12. *God himself is with us for our captain, and his priests with sounding trumpets*. 3. For the animating and encouraging of their armies, when they went out to battle, ver. 9. *If ye go to war blow with the trumpets*, signifying thereby your appeal to heaven, for the decision of the controversy, and your prayer to God to give you victory, and God will own this his own institution, and you shall be remembered before the Lord your God. God will take notice of this sound of the trumpet, and be engaged to fight their battles, and let all the people take notice of it, and be encouraged to fight his, as David, when he heard a sound of a going upon the tops of the mulberry trees. Not that God needed to be awaked by sound of trumpet, no more than Christ needed to be awaked by his disciples in the storm, Matt. viii. 25. But where he intends mercy, it is his will that we should solicit for it; ministers must stir up the good soldiers of Jesus Christ, to fight manfully against sin, the world, and the devil, by assuring them that Christ is the captain of their salvation, and will tread Satan under their feet. 4. For the solemnizing of their sacred feasts, ver. 10. One of their feasts was called the feast of trumpets, Lev. xxiii. 23. And it should seem they were thus to grace the solemnity of all their feasts, Psal. lxxxxi. 3. and their sacrifices, 2 Chron. xxix. 27. to intimate, with what joy and delight they performed their duty to God, and to raise the minds of those that attended the services to a holy triumph in the God they worshipped. And then their performances were for a memorial before God; for then he takes pleasure in our religious exercises, when we take pleasure in them. Holy work should be done with holy joy.

11. ¶ And it came to pass on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle of the testimony. 12. And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran. 13. And they first took their journey, according to the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses. 14. ¶ In the first place went the standard of the camp of the children of Judah, according to their armies: and over his host was Nahshon the son of Amminadab. 15. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Issachar, was Nethaneel the son of Zuar. 16. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Zebulun, was Eliab the son of Helon. 17. And the tabernacle was taken down; and the sons of Gershon, and the sons of Merari, set forward bearing the tabernacle. 18. ¶ And the standard of the camp of Reuben set forward according to their armies: and over his host was Elizur the son of Shedeur. 19. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Simeon, was Shelumiel the son of Zuri-shaddai. 20. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Gad, was Eliasaph the son of Deuel. 21. And the Kohathites set forward, bearing the sanctuary; and the other did set up the tabernacle against they came. 22. ¶ And the standard of the camp of the children of Ephraim set forward according to their armies: and over his host was Elishama

Elifhama the son of Ammihud. 23. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Manasseh, *was* Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. 24. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Benjamin, *was* Abidan the son of Gideon. 25. ¶ And the standard of the camp of the children of Dan set forward, *which was* the rereward of all the camps throughout their hosts: and over his host *was* Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. 26. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Asher, *was* Pagiel the son of Ocran. 27. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Naphtali *was* Ahira the son of Enan. 28. Thus *were* the journeyings of the children of Israel, according to their armies, when they set forward.

Here is, 1. A general account of the remove of the camp of Israel, from mount Sinai, before which mountain it had lain now about a year, in which time and place a great deal of memorable business was done. Of this remove, it should seem God gave them notice some time before, *Deut. i. 6. Ye have dwelt long enough in this mountain, turn you and take your journey towards the land of promise.* The apostle tells us, that *mount Sinai gendereth to bondage*, Gal. iv. 24. and signifies the law there given, which though of use as a school-master to bring us to Christ, yet we must not rest in it, but advance towards the joys and liberties of the children of God, for our happiness is conferred not by the law, but by promise.

Observe, 1. The signal given, *ver. 11. The cloud was taken up*, and we may suppose it stood for some time, till they were ready to march; and a great deal of work it was to take down all those tents, and pack up all those goods that they had there; but every family being employed about their own, and all at the same time, many hands made quick work of it. 2. The march begun; *They took their journey according to the commandment of the Lord*, and just as the cloud led them, *ver. 13.* Some think mention is thus frequently made in this and the foregoing chapter of the *commandment of the Lord*, guiding and governing them in all their travels, to obviate the calumny and reproach which was afterwards thrown upon Israel, that they tarried so long in the wilderness, because they had lost themselves there and could not find the way out: No, the matter was not so, in every stage, in every step, they were under a divine conduct, and if they knew not where they were, yet he that led them did. Note, Those that have given up themselves to the conduct of God's word and Spirit steer a steady course, even then when they seem to be bewildered. While they are sure they cannot lose their God and guide, they need not fear losing their way. 3. The place they rested in after three days march. They went *out of the wilderness of Sinai*, and rested *in the wilderness of Paran*. Note, All our removes in this world are but from one wilderness to another. The changes which we think will be for the better, do not always prove so; while we carry about with us, wherever we go, the common infirmities of human nature, we must expect wherever we go to meet with its common calamities; we shall never be at rest, never at home, till we come to heaven, and all will be well there. 2. A particular draught of the order of their march, according to the late model. 1. Judah's squadron marched first, *ver. 14, 15, 16.* The leading standard now lodged with that tribe, was an earnest of the scepter, which in David's time should be committed to it, and looked further to the captain of our salvation, of whom it was likewise foretold, that *unto him should the gathering of the people be.* 2. Then came those two families of the Levites which were intrusted to carry the tabernacle. As soon as ever the cloud was taken up, the tabernacle was taken down, and packed up for a remove, *ver. 15.* And here the six wagons came laden with the more bulky part of the tabernacle. This frequent removing of the tabernacle in all their journeys, signified the moveableness of that ceremonial dispensation. That which was so often shifted, would at length *vanish away*, Heb. xii. 27, 28. 3. Reuben's squadron marched forward next, taking place after Judah, *according to the commandment of the Lord*, *ver. 18, 19, 20.* 4. Then the Kohathites followed with their charge, the sacred furniture of the tabernacle, *in the midst of the camp*, the safest and most honourable place, *ver. 21.* And they, that is, faith the margin, the Gershonites and Merarites, did *set up the tabernacle against they came*, and perhaps it is expressed thus generally, because if there were occasion, not those Levites only, but the other Israelites that were in the first squadron, lent a hand to the tabernacle to hasten the rearing of it up, even before they set up their own tents. 5. Ephraim's squadron followed next after the ark, *ver. 22, 23, 24.* to which some think the Psalmist alludes, when he prays, *Psal. lxxx. 2. Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, the three tribes that composed this squadron, stir up thy strength* (and the ark is called his strength, *Psal. lxxviii. 6.*) *and come and save us.* 6. Dan's squadron followed last, *ver. 25, 26, 27.* It is called the rear-ward, or gathering host of all the camps, because it gathered up all that were left behind, not the women and children, those we may suppose were taken care of by the heads of their families, in their respective tribes; but all the unclean, the mixed multitude, and all that were weak and feeble,

and cast behind in their march. Note, He that leadeth Joseph like a flock, has a tender regard to the hindmost, that cannot keep pace with the rest, and of *all that are given him he will lose none.* See Ezek. xxxiv. 16.

29. ¶ And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses father in law, We are journeying unto the place of which the LORD said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the LORD hath spoken good concerning Israel. 30. And he said unto him, I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred. 31. And he said, Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes. 32. And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the LORD shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee. 33. ¶ And they departed from the mount of the LORD three days journey: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them in the three days journey, to search out a resting-place for them. 34. And the cloud of the LORD was upon them by day, when they went out of the camp. 35. And it came to pass when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, LORD, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee, flee before thee. 36. And when it rested, he said, Return, O LORD, unto the many thousands of Israel.

Here is, 1. An account of what passed between Moses and Hobab, now upon this advance which the camp of Israel made towards Canaan. Hobab some think was the same with Jethro, Moses father in law, and that the story, *Exod. xviii.* should come in here; it seems more probable, that Hobab was the son of Jethro, *alias* Reuel, or Raguel, *Exod. ii. 18.* And when the father being aged went to his own land, *Exod. xviii. 27.* he left his son Hobab with Moses, as Barzillai left Chimham with David; and the same word signifies both a father in law, and a brother in law. Now this Hobab stopped contentedly with Israel, while they encamped at mount Sinai, near his own country, but now they were removing he was for going back to his own country, and kindred, and his father's house.

Here is, (1.) The kind invitation Moses gives him to go forward with them to Canaan, *ver. 29.* He tempts him with a promise that they would certainly be kind to him, and puts God's word in for security, *the Lord has spoken good concerning Israel. q. d. Come cast in thy lot among us, and thou shalt fare as we fare, and we have the promise of God for it that we shall fare well.* Note, Those that are bound for the heavenly Canaan should invite and encourage all their friends to go along with them, for we shall have never the less of the treasures of the covenant, and the joys of heaven, for others coming in to share with us. And what argument can be more powerful with us, to take God's people for our people, than this, that God *had spoken good concerning them.* It is good having fellowship with those that have fellowship with God, 1 *John i. 3.* and going with those, with whom God is, *Zech. viii. 23.* (2.) Hobab's inclination, and present resolution, to go back to his own country, *ver. 30.* One would have thought, he that had seen so much of the special presence of God with Israel, and such surprizing tokens of his favour to them, should not have needed much invitation to embark with them. But his refusal must be imputed to the affection he had for his native air and soil, which was not over-powered, as it ought to have been, by a believing regard to the promise of God, and a value for covenant blessings. He was indeed a son of Abraham's loins, (for the Midianites descended from Abraham by Keturah) but not an heir of Abraham's faith, (*Heb. xi. 8.*) else he had not given Moses this answer. Note, The things of this world, that are seen, draw strongly from the pursuit of the things of the other world, that are not seen. The magnetick virtue of this earth prevails with most people above the attractives of heaven it self. (3.) The great importunity Moses used with him to alter his resolution, *ver. 31, 32.* He urgeth, (1.) That he might be serviceable to them, *we are to encamp in the wilderness*, (a country well known to Hobab) and *thou mayest be to us instead of eyes*, not to shew us where we must encamp, nor what way we must march, the cloud was to direct that, but to shew us the conveniences and inconveniences of the place we march through, and encamp in, that we may make the best use we can of the conveniences, and the best fence we can against the inconveniences. Note, It will very well consist with our trust in God's providence to make use of the help of our friends, in those things wherein they are capable of being serviceable to us. Even they that were led by miracle, must not slight the ordinary means of direction. Some think Moses suggests this to Hobab, not because he expected much benefit by his informations, but to please him with the thought of being some way useful to so great a body, and so to draw him on with them by the ambition of that honour. Cal-

vin gives quite another sense of this place, very agreeably with the original, which yet I do not find taken notice of by any since. *Leave us not, I pray thee, but come along, to share with us in the promised land, for therefore hast thou known our encampment in the wilderness, and hast been to us instead of eyes; and we cannot make thee amends for sharing with us in our hardships, and doing us so many good offices, unless thou go with us to Canaan. Surely for this reason thou didst set out with us, that thou mightest go on with us.* Note, Those that have begun well, should use that as a reason for their persevering, because otherwise they lose the benefit and recompence of all they have done and suffered. (2.) That they would be kind to him, *ver. 32. What good, says the Lord shall do to us, the same will we do to thee.* Note, 1. We can but give what we receive. We can do no more service and kindness to our friends, than God is pleased to put it into the power of our hand to do. This is all we dare promise, to do good, as God shall enable us. 2. Those that share with God's Israel in their labours and hardships, shall share with them in their comforts and honours. Those that are willing to take their lot with them in a wilderness, shall have their lot with them in Canaan; *if we suffer with them, we shall reign with them,* Luke xxii. 28, 29.

We do not find any reply that Hobab here made to Moses, and therefore we hope his silence gave consent, and he did not leave them. When he perceived he might be useful, he preferred that before the gratifying of his own inclination; and hath therein left us a good example. And we find, *Judg. i. 16.* that his family was no loser by it. And see *1 Sam. xv. 6.* 2. An account of the communion between God and Israel in this remove. They left the mount of the Lord, *ver. 33.* That mount Sinai, where they had seen his glory, and heard his voice, and had been taken into covenant with him, they must not expect that such appearances of God to them, as they had there been blest with, should be constant; they depart from that celebrated mountain, which we never read of in scripture any more, unless with reference to these past stories; now farewell Sinai, Sion is the mountain of which God has said, *This is my rest for ever,* Psal. cxxxii. 14. and of which we must say so. But when they left that mount of the Lord, they took with them the ark of the covenant of the Lord, by which their stated communion with God was to be kept up. For, 1. By it God did direct their paths. The ark of the covenant went before them, some think in place, at least in this remove, others think, only in influence; though it was carried in the midst of the camp, yet the cloud that hovered over it directed all their motions. The ark, that is, the God of the ark is said to search out a resting-place for them, not that God's infinite wisdom and knowledge needs to make searches, but every place they were directed to was as convenient for them, as if the wisest man they had among them had been employed to go before them and mark out their camp to the best advantage. Thus Canaan is said to be a land which God spied out, *Ezek. xx. 6.* 2. By it they did in all their ways acknowledge God, looking upon it as a token of God's presence, when that moved or rested, they had their eye up unto God. Moses, as the mouth of the congregation, lifted up a prayer, both at the removing, and at the resting of the ark; thus their going out and coming in were sanctified by prayer, and it is an example to us to begin and end every day's journey, and every day's work with prayer. 1. Here is his prayer when the ark set forward, *ver. 35. Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered.* They were now in a desolate country, but they were marching towards an enemy's country, and their dependence was upon God for success and victory in their wars, as well as for direction and supply in the wilderness. David used this prayer long after, *Psal. lxxviii. 1.* for he also fought the Lord's battles. Note, (1.) There are those in the world that are enemies to God, and haters of him. Secret and open enemies; enemies to his truths, his laws, his ordinances, his people. (2.) The scattering and defeating of God's enemies is a thing to be earnestly desired, and believingly expected, by all the Lord's people. This prayer is a prophecy. Those that persist in rebellion against God, are hastening towards their own ruin. (3.) For the scattering and defeating of God's enemies, there needs no more but God's arising. *When God arose to judgment,* the work was soon done, *Psal. lxxvi. 8, 9.* Rise, Lord, as the sun riseth to scatter the shadows of the night. Christ's rising from the dead scattered his enemies, *Psal. lxxviii. 18.* 2. His prayer when the ark rested, *ver. 36.* (1.) That God would cause his people to rest. So some read it, *Return, O Lord, the many thousands of Israel,* return them to their rest again after this fatigue. Thus it is said, *Isa. lxiii. 14. The Spirit of the Lord causeth him to rest.* Thus he prays that God would give Israel success and victory abroad, and peace and tranquillity at home. (2.) That God himself would take up his rest among them. So we read it, *Return to the thousands of Israel, the ten thousand thousand.* So the word is. Note, 1. The church of God is a great body; there are many thousands belonging to God's Israel. 2. We ought in our prayers to concern our selves for this body. 3. The welfare and happiness of the Israel of God consists in the remaining presence of God among them. Their safety consists not in their numbers, though they are thousands, many thou-

sands, but in the favour of God, and his gracious return to them, and residence with them. These thousands are ciphers, he is the figure, and upon this account, *Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people!*

CHAP. XI.

Hitherto things had gone pretty well in Israel, little interruption had been given to the methods of God's favour to them since the matter of the golden calf, the people seemed teachable in marshalling and purifying the camp, the princes devout and generous in dedicating the altar, and there was good hope that they would be in Canaan presently. But at this chapter begins a melancholy scene, the measures are all broke, God is turned to be their enemy, and fights against them, and it is sin, sin, that makes all the mischief. 1. Their murmurings kindled a fire among them, which yet was soon quenched by the prayer of Moses, ver. 1—3. 2. No sooner was that fire of judgment quenched, but the fire of sin breaks out again, and God takes occasion from it to magnify both his mercy and his justice. 1. The people fret for want of flesh, ver. 4—9. 2. Moses frets for want of help, ver. 10—15. Now, 1. God promiseth to gratify them both, to appoint help for Moses, ver. 16, 17. And to give the people flesh, ver. 18—23. And, 2. He presently makes good both his promises. For, 1. The Spirit of God qualifies the seventy elders for the government, ver. 24—30. 2. The power of God brings quails to feast the people, ver. 31, 32. Yet, 3. The justice of God plagued them for their murmurings, ver. 33—35.

1. **A**ND when the people complained, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard it; and his anger was kindled: and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp. 2. And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the LORD, the fire was quenched. 3. And he called the name of the place Taberah: because the fire of the LORD burnt among them.

Here is, 1. The people's sin. They complained, *ver. 1. They were as it were complainers.* So it is in the margin. There were some secret grudgings and discontents among them, which as yet did not break out in an open mutiny. But how great a matter did this little fire kindle! They had received from God excellent laws and ordinances, and yet no sooner were they departed from the mount of the Lord, but they begun to quarrel with God himself. See in this, (1.) The sinfulness of sin, which takes occasion from the commandment to be the more provoking. (2.) The weakness of the law through the flesh, *Rom. viii. 3.* The law discovered sin, but could not destroy it; checked it, but could not conquer it.

They complained. Interpreters enquire what they complained of; and truly when they were furnished with so much matter for thanksgiving, one may justly wonder where they found any matter for complaint; and it is likely all that complained did not agree in the cause. Some perhaps complained that they were removed from mount Sinai, where they had been at rest so long, others that they did not remove sooner: some complained of the weather, others of the ways: some perhaps thought three days journey was too long a march, others thought it not long enough, because it did not bring them into Canaan. When we consider how their camp was guided, guarded, graced, what good victuals they had, and good company, and what care was taken of them in their marches, that their feet should not swell, nor their clothes wear, (*Deut. viii. 4.*) we may ask, what could have been done more for a people to make them easy? And yet they complained. Note, Those that are of a fretful discontented Spirit will always find something or other to quarrel with, though the circumstances of their outward condition be never so favourable. 2. God's just resentment of the affront given him by this sin. *The Lord heard it,* though it doth not appear that Moses did. Note, God is acquainted with the secret frets and murmurings of the heart, though they are industriously concealed from men. What he took notice of, he was much displeased with, and his anger was kindled. Note, Though God graciously gives us leave to complain to him when there is cause, (*Psal. cxlii. 2.*) yet he is justly provoked, and takes it very ill, if we complain of him when there is no cause; we do so from our inferiors. 3. The judgment wherewith God chastised them for this sin. *The fire of the Lord burnt among them,* such flashes of fire from the cloud as had consumed Nadab and Abihu. The fire of their wrath against God burned in their minds, (*Psal. xxxix. 3.*) and justly doth the fire of God's wrath fasten upon their bodies. We read of their murmurings several times when they came first out of Egypt, *Exod. xv.* and *xvi.* and *xvii.* But we do not read of any plagues inflicted on them for their murmurings, as there were now; for now they had had great experience of God's care of them, and therefore now to distrust him was so much the more inexcusable. Now a fire was kindled against Jacob, *Psal. lxxviii. 21:* but to shew how unwilling God was to contend with them, it fastened on those only that were

were in the uttermost parts of the camp. Thus God's judgments came upon them gradually, that they might take warning. 4. Their cry to Moses, who was their intercessor, *ver. 2. When he slew them, then they sought him,* and made their application to Moses to stand their friend. Note, 1. When we complain without cause, it is just with God to give us cause to complain. 2. Those that slight God's friends, when they are in prosperity, would be glad to make them their friends when they are in distress: *Father Abraham, send Lazarus.* 5. The prevalency of Moses's intercession for them; *when Moses prayed unto the Lord,* as he was always ready to stand in the gap to turn away the wrath of God, God had respect to him and his offering, and *the fire was quenched.* By this it appears that God delights not in punishing, for when he has begun his controversy, he is soon prevailed with to let it fall. Moses was one of those worthies, who *by faith quenched the violence of fire.* 6. A new name given hereupon to the place, to perpetuate the shame of a murmuring people; and the honour of a righteous God, the place was called Taberah, a burning, *ver. 3.* that others might hear and fear, and take warning not to sin as they did; lest they smart as they did, *1 Cor. x. 10.*

4. ¶ And the mixt multitude that *was* among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? 5. We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: 6. But now our soul is dried away; *there is nothing at all,* besides this manna, before our eyes. 7. And the manna *was* as coriander-seed, and the colour thereof as the colour of bdellium. 8. And the people went about, and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it: and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil. 9. And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it. 10. ¶ Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent: and the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly; Moses also was displeased. 11. And Moses said unto the LORD, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? 12. Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that thou shouldst say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom (as a nursing-father beareth the sucking child) unto the land which thou swearest unto their fathers? 13. Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? for they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh that we may eat. 14. I am not able to bear all this people alone, because *it is too heavy for me.* 15. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness.

These verses represent things sadly unhinged, and out of order, in Israel: both the people and the prince uneasy.

1. Here is the people fretting, and speaking against God himself, (as it is interpreted, *Psal. lxxviii. 19.*) notwithstanding his glorious appearances both to them, and for them.

Observe, 1. Who were the criminals, (1.) The *mixt multitude* began, they *fell a lusting*, *ver. 4.* The rabble that came with them out of Egypt, expecting only the land of promise, but not a state of probation in the way to it. They were hangers on, which took hold of the skirts of the Jews, and would go with them, only because they knew not how to live at home, and were minded to seek their fortunes (as we say) abroad. These were the scabbed sheep that infected the flock, the leaven that leavened the whole lump. Note, A few factious, discontented, ill natured people, may do a great deal of mischief in the best societies, if great care be not taken to discountenance them. Such as these are an *untoward generation*, from which it is our wisdom to *save our selves*, *Acts ii. 40.* (2.) Even the children of Israel took the infection, so it follows, *ver. 4.* The holy seed joined themselves to the people of these abominations. This mixt multitude was not numbred with the children of Israel, but were set aside as people God made no account of, and yet the children of Israel, forgetting their own character and distinction, herded themselves with them, and learned their way; as if the scum and out-casts of the camp were to be the privy counsellors of it. The children of Israel, a people near to God, and highly privileged, yet drawn into a rebellion against him. O! how little honour hath God in the world, when even that people which he formed for himself, to shew forth his praise, were so much a dishonour to him. Therefore let none think that their external professions and privileges will be their security either against Satan's temptations to sin, or against God's judgments for sin. See *1 Cor. x. 1, 2, 12.* 2. What was the crime; they lusted, and murmured. Though

they were newly corrected for this sin, and many of them overthrown for it, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and the smell of the fire was still in their nostrils, yet they returned to it. See *Prov. xxvii. 22.*

1. They magnified the plenty and dainties they had had in Egypt, *ver. 5.* as if God had done them a great deal of wrong in taking them thence. While they were in Egypt they sighed by reason of their burthens, for their lives were made bitter to them with hard bondage; and yet now they talk of Egypt, as if they had all lived like princes there, when this serves as a colour for their present discontent. But with what face can they talk of eating fish in Egypt freely, or for nought, as if it cost them nothing, when they paid so dear for it, with their hard service? They remember the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick, (precious stuff indeed to be fond of!) but they do not remember the brick-kilns, and the task-masters, the voice of the oppressor, and the smart of the whip. No, these are forgotten by these ungrateful people. 2. They were sick of the good provision God had made for them, *ver. 6.* It was bread from heaven, angels food, to shew how unreasonable their complaint was, it is here described, *ver. 7, 8, 9.* It was good for food, and pleasant to the eye, every grain like an orient pearl, it was wholesome food, and nourishing, it was not to be called dry bread, for it tasted like fresh oil; it was agreeable (the Jews say) to every man's palate, and tasted as he would have it: and though it was still the same, yet, by the different ways of dressing it, it yielded them a grateful variety: it cost them no money, nor care, for it fell in the night, while they slept, and the labour of gathering it was not worth speaking of; they lived upon free quarter, and yet could talk of Egypt's cheapness; and the fish they eat there freely. Nay, which was much more valuable than all this, the manna came from the immediate power and bounty of God, not from common providence, but from special favour. It was, as God's compassion, new every morning, always fresh, not as their food that live on ship-board. While they lived on manna, they seemed to have been exempted from the curse which sin has brought on man, that in the sweat of his face he should eat bread. And yet they speak of the manna with such scorn, as if it were not good enough to be swine-meat. *Our soul is dried away.* They speak as if God dealt hardly with them in allowing them no better food; at first they admired it, *Exod. xvi. 5. What is this?* What a curious precious thing is this? But now they despised it. Note, Peevish discontented minds will find fault with that which had no fault in it, but that it is too good for them. It is very provoking to God to undervalue his favours, and to put a but upon our common mercies. *Nothing but manna.* Those that are very happy, oft make themselves very miserable, by their discontents. 3. They could not be satisfied unless they had flesh to eat. They brought flocks and herds with them in great abundance out of Egypt; but either they were covetous, and could not find in their hearts to kill them, lest they should lessen their flocks; they must have flesh as cheap as they had bread, or they would not be pleased; or else they were curious, beef and mutton would not please them, they must have something more nice and delicate, like the fish they did eat in Egypt. Food would not serve, they must be feasted; they had feasted with God upon the peace-offerings, which they had their share of; but it seems God did not keep a table good enough for them, they must have daintier bits than any came to his altar. Note, It is an evidence of the dominion of the carnal mind, when we are solicitous to have all the delights and satisfactions of sense wound up to the height of pleasurableness. *Be not desirous of dainties,* *Prov. xxiii. 1, 2, 3.* If God give us food convenient, we ought to be thankful, though we do not eat the fat, and drink the sweet. 4. They distrusted the power and goodness of God as insufficient for their supply; *Who will give us flesh to eat?* taking it for granted that God could not. Thus this question is commented upon, *Psal. lxxviii. 19, 20. Can he give flesh also?* Though he had given them flesh with their bread once, when he saw fit, *Exod. xvi. 13.* and they might have expected that he would have done it again, and in mercy, if instead of murmuring they had prayed. Note, It is an offence to God, to let our desires go beyond our faith. 5. They were eager and importunate in their desires; they lusted a lust; so the word is, lusted greatly, and greedily, till they wept again, for vexation. So childish were the children of Israel, and so humourous, they cried because they had not what they would have, and when they would have it. They did not offer up this desire to God, but would rather be beholden to any one else than to him. We should not indulge our selves in any desire, which we cannot in faith turn into prayer, as we cannot, when we ask meat for our lust, *Psal. lxxviii. 18.*

For this sin the anger of the Lord was kindled greatly against them, which is written for our admonition, that we should not *lust after evil things, as they lusted*, *1 Cor. x. 10.* Flesh is good food, and may lawfully be eaten, yet they are said to lust after evil things; what is lawful in it self, becomes evil to us, when it is what God doth not allot to us, and yet we eagerly desire it. 2. Moses himself, though so meek and good a man, is uneasy upon this occasion. *Moses also was displeased.* Now, 1. It must be confessed, that the provocation was very great. These mur-

murings of theirs reflected great dishonour upon God, and Moses laid to heart the reproaches cast on him. They also created great vexation to himself; they knew he did his utmost for their good, and that he did nothing, nor could, without a divine appointment, and yet to be thus continually teased and clamoured upon by an unreasonable ungrateful people, would break in upon the temper even of Moses himself. God considered this, and therefore we do not find, that he chid him for his uneasiness. 2. Yet Moses expressed himself otherwise than became him upon this provocation, and came short of his duty both to God and Israel in these expostulations. (1.) He undervalues the honour God had put upon him, in making him the illustrious minister of his power and grace, in the deliverance and conduct of that peculiar people, which might have been sufficient to balance the burden. (2.) He complains too much of a sensible grievance, and lays too near his heart a little noise and fatigue. If he could not bear the toil of government, which was but "running with the footmen," how would he bear the terrors of war, which was "contending with horses." He might easily have furnished himself with considerations enough to enable him to slight their clamours, and make nothing of them. (3.) He magnifies his own performances, that *all the burden of the people lay upon him*. Whereas God himself did in effect ease him of all the burden. Moses needed not be in care to provide quarters for them, or victuals; God did all: And if any difficult case happened, he needed not be in a perplexity, while he had the oracle to consult, and in it the divine wisdom to direct him, the divine authority to back him, and bear him out, and almighty power it self to dispense rewards and punishments. (4.) He is not sensible, as he ought to be, of the obligation he lay under from the divine commission and command, to do the utmost he could for this people, when he suggests that because they were not the children of his body begotten, therefore he was not concerned to take a fatherly care of them, though God himself, who might employ him as he pleased, had appointed him to be a father to them. (5.) He takes too much to himself when he asks, *Whence should I have flesh to give them?* ver. 13. as if he were the house-keeper, and not God. *Moses gave them not the bread*, John vi. 34. Nor was it expected that he should give them the flesh, but as an instrument in God's hand; and if he meant, whence should God have it for them; he too much limited the power of the holy One of Israel. (6.) He speaks distrustfully of the divine grace, when he despairs of being *able to bear all this people*, ver. 14. Had the work been much less, he could not have gone through it in his own strength, but had it been much greater, through God strengthening him he might have done it. (7.) It was worst of all passionately to wish for death, and desire to be killed out of hand, because just at this time his life was made a little uneasy to him, ver. 15. Is this Moses? Is this the meekest of all the men on the earth? The best have their infirmities, and fail sometimes in the exercise of that grace, which they are most eminent for. But God graciously overlooked Moses's passion at this time, and therefore we must not be severe in our animadversions upon it, but pray, Lord, *lead us not into temptation*.

16. ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee. 17. And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thy self alone. 18. And say thou unto the people, Sanctify your selves against tomorrow, and ye shall eat flesh (for you have wept in the ears of the LORD, saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? for it was well with us in Egypt) therefore the LORD will give you flesh, and ye shall eat. 19. Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days; 20. But even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you: because that ye have despised the LORD which is among you, and have wept before him, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt? 21. And Moses said, The people amongst whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen: and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month. 22. Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them? 23. And the LORD said unto Moses, Is the LORD's hand waxed short? thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee, or not.

We have here God's gracious answer to both the foregoing complaints, wherein his goodness takes occasion from man's bad-

ness to appear so much the more illustrious. 1. Provision is made for the redress of the grievances Moses complains of. If he find the weight of government lie too heavy upon him, though he was a little too passionate in his remonstrance, yet he shall be eased, not by being discarded from the government himself, as he justly might have been, if God had been extream to mark what he said amiss, but by having assistants appointed him, who should be as the apostle speaks, *1 Cor. xii. 28. helps, governments*, i. e. helps in government, not at all to lessen or eclipse his honour, but to make the work more easy to him, and to *bear the burden of the people with him*. And that this provision might be both agreeable, and really serviceable, (1.) Moses is directed to nominate the persons, ver. 16. The people were too hot and heady, and tumultuous to be intrusted with the election; Moses must please himself in the choice, that he may not afterwards complain. The number he is to chuse is seventy men, according to the number of the souls that went down into Egypt. He must chuse such as he knew to be elders, i. e. wise and experienced men. Those that had acquitted themselves best, as *rulers of thousands and hundreds*, Exod. xviii. 25. purchase to themselves now this good degree. Chuse such as thou knowest to be elders indeed, and not in name only, officers that do their office. We read of the same number of elders, Exod. xxiv. 1. that went up with Moses to mount Sinai, but they were distinguished only for that occasion, these for a perpetuity; and according to this constitution the Sanhedrim, or great council of the Jews, which in after ages sat at Jerusalem, and was the highest court of judgment among them, consisted of seventy men. And our Saviour seems to have had an eye to it, in the choice of seventy disciples, who were to be assistants to the apostles, *Luke x.* (2) God promiseth to qualify them. If they were not found fit for the employ, they should be made fit, else they might prove more a hindrance than a help to Moses, ver. 17. Though Moses had talked too boldly with God, yet God doth not therefore break off communion with him; he bears a great deal with us, and we must with one another; *I will come down* (saith God) *and talk with thee*, when thou art more calm and composed; *and I will take of the same spirit* of wisdom, and piety, and courage *that is upon thee*, and *put it upon them*. Not that Moses had the less of the Spirit for their sharing, nor that they were hereby made equal with him, Moses was still a non-such, *Deut. xxxiv. 10.* but they were clothed with a spirit of government proportionable to their place, and with a spirit of prophecy to evidence their divine call to it, the government being a theocracy. Note, 1. Those whom God employs in any service he qualifies for it, and those that are not in some measure qualified, cannot think themselves duly called. 2. All good qualifications are from God; every *perfect gift is from the Father of lights*. 2. Even the humour of the discontented people shall be gratified too, that every mouth may be stopped. They are bid to *sanctify themselves*, ver. 18. i. e. to put themselves into a posture to receive such a proof of God's power, as should be a token both of mercy and judgment. *Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel*, Amos iv. 12.

1. God promiseth (shall I say!) he threatens rather, that they should have their belly-full of flesh; that for a month together they should not only be fed, but feasted with flesh, besides their daily manna; and if they had not a better government of their appetites than now it appeared they had, they should be surfeited with it, ver. 19, 20. You shall eat *till it come out at your nostrils*, and become loathsome to you. See here, 1. The vanity of all the delights of sense, they will cloy, but not satisfy; spiritual pleasures are contrary. As the world passeth away, so do the lusts of it, *1 Joh. ii. 17.* What was greedily coveted, in a little time comes to be nauseated. 2. What brutish sins (and worse than brutish) gluttony and drunkenness are? They put a force upon nature, and make that the sickness of the body which should be its health; they are sins that are their own punishments, and yet not the worst that attend them. 3. What a righteous thing it is with God, to make that loathsome to men which they have inordinately lusted after. God could make them despise flesh, as much as they had despised manna. 2. Moses objects the improbability of making good this word, ver. 21, 22. It is an objection like that which the disciples made, *Mark viii. 4. Whence can a man satisfy these men?* Some excuse Moses here, and construe what he saith as only a modest inquiry, which way the supply must be expected; but it favours too much of diffidence and distrust of God to be justified. He objects the number of the people, as if he that provided bread for them all, could not by the same unlimited power provide flesh too. He reckons it must be the flesh either of beasts or fishes, because of them are the most bulky animals; little thinking that the flesh of birds, little birds, should serve the purpose. God sees not as man sees, but his thoughts are above ours. He objects the greediness of the peoples desire, in that word, *to suffice them*. Note, Even true and great believers sometimes find it hard to trust God under the discouragements of second causes, and *against hope to believe in hope*. Moses himself can scarce forbear saying, *Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?* when this was become the common cry. No doubt this was his infirmity. 3. God gives a short but sufficient answer

answer to the objection, in that question, *Is the Lord's hand waxed short?* ver. 23. If Moses had remembered *the years of the right hand of the most High*, he had not started all these difficulties, therefore God minds him of them, intimating, that this objection reflected upon the divine power, which he himself had been so oft not only the witness, but the instrument of. Had he forgot what wonders the divine power had wrought for that people, inflicted the plagues of Egypt, divided the sea, breached the rock, and rained bread from heaven, and is that power abated? Is God weaker than he used to be! Or, is he tired with what he has done! Whatever our unbelieving hearts may suggest to the contrary, it is certain, 1. That God's hand is not short, his power cannot be restrain'd in the exerting of it self by any thing but his own will, with him nothing is impossible. That hand is not short which measures the waters, metes out the heavens (*Isa. xl. 12.*) and grasps the winds (*Prov. xxx. 4.*) 2. That it is not waxed short. He is as strong as ever he was, *fainteth not, neither is weary.* And this is sufficient to silence all our distrusts, when means fail us, *Is any thing too hard for the Lord?* God here brings Moses to this first principle, sets him back in his lesson to learn the ancient name of God, *The Lord God Almighty*, and puts the proof upon the issue, *Thou shalt see whether my word shall come to pass or not.* This magnifies God's word above all his name, that his works never come short of it. If he speaks, it is done.

24. ¶ And Moses went out, and told the people the words of the LORD, and gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them round about the tabernacle. 25. And the LORD came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass that when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease. 26. But there remained two of the men in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: and the spirit rested upon them (and they were of them that were written, but went not out unto the tabernacle) and they prophesied in the camp. 27. And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp. 28. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them. 29. And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the LORD's people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them. 30. And Moses gat him into the camp, he and the elders of Israel.

We have here the performance of God's word to Moses, that he should have help in the government of Israel. 1. Here is the case of the seventy privy counsellors in general. Moses though a little disturbed by the tumult of the people, yet was thoroughly composed by the communion with God, and soon came to himself again. And according as the matter was concerted, (1.) He did his part, he presented the seventy elders before the Lord round the tabernacle, ver. 24. that they might there stand ready to receive the *grace of God*, in the place where he manifested himself, and that the people also might be witnesses of their solemn call. Note, Those that expect favour from God, must humbly offer themselves, and their service to him. (2.) God was not wanting to do his part. *He gave of his Spirit to the seventy elders*, ver. 25. which enabled them whose capacities and education set them but on a level with their neighbours, yet of a sudden to say and do that which was extraordinary, and which shewed them acted by a divine inspiration, they prophesied and did not cease, all that day, and (some think) only that day. They discoursed to the people of the things of God, and perhaps commented upon the law they had lately received with admirable clearness, and fulness, and readiness, and aptness of expression, so that all that heard them might see and say, that *God was with them of a truth*; see *1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.* Thus long after Saul was marked for the government by the gift of prophecy, which came upon him for a day and a night, *1 Sam. x. 6, 11.* When Moses was to fetch Israel out of Egypt, Aaron was appointed to be his prophet, *Exod. vii. 1.* But now God had called him to other work, in his room Moses has seventy prophets to attend him. Note, Those are fittest to rule in God's Israel, that are well acquainted with divine things, and are apt to teach to edification. 2. Here is the particular case of two of them, Eldad and Medad, probably two brothers. (1.) They were nominated by Moses to be assistants in the government, but they *went not out unto the tabernacle* as the rest did, ver. 26. Calvin conjectures, that the summons was sent them, yet it did not find them, they were somewhere out of the way, so that though they were written, yet they were not called. Most think they declined coming to the tabernacle, out of an excess of modesty and humility; being sensible of their own weakness and unworthiness, they desired

to be excused from coming into the government. Their principle was their praise, but their practice in not obeying orders was their fault. (2.) The Spirit of God found them out in the camp, where they were hid among the stuff, and there they prophesied, i. e. they exercised their gift of praying, preaching, and praising God in some private tent. Note, The Spirit of God is not tied to the tabernacle, but *like the wind, blows where he listeth*, *Joh. iii. 8.* *Whither can we go from that Spirit?* There was a special providence in it, that these two should be absent, for thus it appeared that it was indeed a divine Spirit which the elders were acted by, and that Moses gave them not that Spirit, but God himself. They modestly declined preferment, but God forces it upon them; nay, they have the honour of being named, which the rest have not: for they that humble themselves shall be exalted; and those are most fit for government, who are least ambitious of it. (3.) Information of this is given to Moses, ver. 27. *Eldad and Medad prophesied in the camp*; there is a conventicle in such a tent, and Eldad and Medad are holding forth there, from under the inspection and presidency of Moses, and out of the communion of the rest of the elders. Whoever the person was that brought the tidings, he seems to have looked upon it as an irregularity. (4.) Joshua moves to have them silenced, ver. 28. *My Lord Moses, forbid them*; it is probable Joshua was himself one of the seventy, which made him the more jealous for the honour of their order. He takes it for granted, that they were not under any necessitating impulse, *for the spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets*, and therefore he would have them either not to prophesy at all, or to come to the tabernacle, and prophesy in consort with the rest. He doth not desire they should be punished for what they had done, but only restrained for the future. This motion he made from a good principle, not out of any personal disgust to Eldad and Medad, but out of an honest zeal for that which he apprehended to be the unity of the church, and in concern for the honour of God and Moses. (5.) Moses rejects the motion, and reproves him that made it, ver. 29. *Enviest thou for my sake?* Thou knowest not what manner of spirit thou art of. Though Joshua was Moses's particular friend and confidant, though he said this out of a respect to Moses, whose honour he was very loth to see lessened by the call of those elders, yet Moses reproves him, and in him all that are so spirited. 1. We must not secretly grieve at the gifts, graces, and usefulness of others. It was the fault of John's disciples, that they envied Christ's honour, because it shaded their master's, *John iii. 26, &c.* 2. We must not be transported into heats against the weaknesses and infirmities of others. Supposing it was an irregularity that Eldad and Medad were guilty of, yet Joshua was too quick, and too warm upon them. Our zeal must always be tempered with the meekness of wisdom: the righteousness of God needs not the wrath of man, *James i. 20.* 3. We must not make the best and most useful men heads of a party. Paul would not have his name made use of to patronize a faction, *1 Cor. i. 12, 13.* 4. We must not be forward to condemn and silence those that differ from us, as if they did not follow Christ, because they do not follow him with us, *Mark ix. 38.* Shall we reject those whom Christ has owned? or restrain any from doing good, because they are not in every thing of our mind? Moses was of another spirit; so far from silencing these two, and quenching the Spirit in them, that he wishes *all the Lord's people were prophets*, that is, that he would put his Spirit upon them. Not that he would have any set up for prophets, that were not duly qualified, or that he expected that the Spirit of prophecy should be made thus common; but thus he expresseth the love and esteem he had for *all the Lord's people*, the complacency he took in the gifts of others, and how far he was from being displeased at Eldad's and Medad's prophesying from under his eye. Such an excellent spirit as this blessed Paul was of, rejoicing that Christ was preached, though it were by those who therein intended to add affliction to his bonds, *Phil. i. 18.* We ought to be pleased that God is served and glorified, and good done; though to the lessening of our credit, and the credit of our way. (6.) The elders now newly ordained, immediately entred upon their administration, ver. 30. when their call was sufficiently attested by their prophesying, they went with Moses to the camp, and applied themselves to business. Having received the gift, they ministered the same as good stewards. And now Moses was pleased that he had so many to share with him in his work and honour: And, 1. Let the testimony of Moses be credited by those who desire to be in power, That government is a burthen. It is a burthen of care and trouble to those who make conscience of the duty of it; and to those who do not, it will prove a heavier burthen in the day of account, when they fall under the doom of the unprofitable servant that buried his talent. 2. Let the example of Moses be imitated by those that are in power; let them not despise the advice and assistance of others, but desire it, and be thankful for it; not coveting to monopolize wisdom and power. In multitude of counsellors there is safety.

31. ¶ And there went forth a wind from the LORD, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a days journey on this side, and as it were a days journey on the other side, round about the camp,

camp, and as it were two cubits *high* upon the face of the earth. 32. And the people stood up all that day, and all *that* night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails: he that gathered least, gathered ten homers: and they spread *them* all abroad for themselves round about the camp. 33. And while the flesh *was* yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed; the wrath of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD smote the people with a very great plague. 34. And he called the name of that place, Kibroth-hattaavah: because there they buried the people that lusted. 35. And the people journeyed from Kibroth-hattaavah unto Hazeroth: and abode at Hazeroth.

God having performed his promise to Moses, in giving him *assessors* in the government, and proving thereby the power he has over the spirits of men, by his Spirit: he here performs his promise to the people in giving them flesh, and proving thereby his power over the inferior creatures, and his dominion in the kingdom of nature. Observe, 1. How the people were gratified with flesh in abundance, *ver. 31.* *A wind* (a south-east wind, as appears, *Psal. lxxviii. 26.*) brought quails. It is uncertain what sort of animals they were; the Psalmist calls them *feathered fowl*, or fowl of wing. The learned bishop Patrick inclines to agree with some modern writers, who think they were locusts, a delicious sort of food well known in those parts, the rather, because they were brought with a wind, lay in heaps, and were dried in the sun for use. Whatever they were, they answered the intention, they served for a month's feast for Israel; such an indulgent Father was God to this froward family. Locusts, that had been a plague to fruitful Egypt, feeding upon the fruits, were a blessing to a barren wilderness, being themselves fed upon. 2. How greedy they were of this flesh that God sent them, they *flew upon the spoil* with an insatiable appetite, not regarding what Moses had told them from God, that they would surfeit upon it, *ver. 32.* Two days and a night they were at it, gathering flesh, till every master of a family had brought home ten homers, (that was ten ass-load) at least. David longed for the water of the well of Bethlehem, but would not drink it when he had it, because it was obtained by venturing; much more reason these Israelites had to refuse this flesh, which was obtained by murmuring, and which they might easily perceive, by what Moses said, was given them in anger; but those that are under the power of a carnal mind will have their lusts fulfilled, though it be to the certain damage and ruin of their precious souls. 3. How dear they paid for their feasts when it came into the reckoning, *ver. 33.* *The Lord smote them with a very great plague*; some bodily disease, which probably was the effect of their surfeit, and was the death of many of them, and those, it is likely, the ring-leaders in the mutiny. Note, God often grants the desires of sinners in wrath, while he denies the desires of his own people in love. He gave them their request, but sent *leanness into their soul*, *Psal. cvi. 15.* By all that was said to them they were not estranged from their lusts, and therefore while the meat was in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them, *Psal. lxxviii. 30, 31.* What we inordinately desire, if we obtain it, we have reason to fear that it will be some way or other a grief and cross to us. God sufficed them first, and then plagued them, (1.) To save the reputation of his own power, that it might not be said, He had not cut them off, but because he was not able to suffice them. And, (2.) To shew us the meaning of the prosperity of sinners, it is their preparation for ruin; they are fed as an ox for the slaughter. Lastly, The remembrance of this is preserved in the name given to the place, *ver. 34.* Moses called it Kibroth-Hattaavah, the graves of lusts, or of lust. And well it had been, if these graves of Israel's lusts had proved the graves of Israel's lust: the warning was designed to be so, but it had not its due effect, for it follows, *Psal. lxxviii. 32.* *For all this they sinned still.*

C H A P. XII.

In the foregoing chapter we had the vexation which the people gave to Moses, in this we have his patience tried by his own relations.

1. Miriam and Aaron his own brother and sister affronted him, *ver. 1—3.*
 2. God called them to an account for it, *ver. 4—9.*
 3. Miriam was smitten with a leprosy for it, *ver. 10.*
 4. Aaron submits, and Moses meekly intercedes for her, *ver. 11—13.*
 5. She is healed, but put to shame for seven days, *ver. 14—26.*
- And this is recorded, to shew that the best persons and families have both their follies and their crosses.

1. **A**ND Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses, because of the Ethiopian woman, whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. 2. And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard it. 3. (Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)

No. XI.

Here is, 1. The wonderful passion of Aaron and Miriam, they *spake against Moses*, *ver. 1.* If Moses that received so much honour from God, yet received so many flights and affronts from men, shall any of us think such trials either strange or hard, and be either provoked or discouraged by them? But who would have thought that disturbance should be created to Moses, (1.) From those that were themselves serious and good; nay, that were eminent in religion, Miriam a prophetess, Aaron the high priest, both of them joint-commissioners with Moses for the deliverance of Israel? *Mic. vi. 4.* *I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.* (2.) From those that were his nearest relations, his own brother and sister, who shone so much by rays borrowed from him? Thus the spouse complains, *Cant. i. 6.* *My mothers children were angry with me*, and quarrels among relations are in a special manner grievous; *A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city.* Yet this helps to confirm the call of Moses, and shews that his advancement was purely by the divine favour, and not by any compact or collusion with his kindred, who themselves grudged at his advancement. Neither did many of our Saviour's kindred believe on him, *Joh. vii. 5.* It should seem that Miriam began the quarrel, and Aaron having not been employed or consulted in the choice of the seventy elders, was for the present somewhat disgusted, and so was the sooner drawn in to take his sister's part. It would grieve one to see the hand of Aaron in so many trespasses, but it shews that *the law made men priests that had infirmity.* Satan prevailed first with Eve, and by her with Adam; see what need we have to take heed of being drawn into quarrels by our relations, for we know not how great a matter a little fire may kindle. Aaron ought to have remembered how Moses stood his friend, when God was angry with him for making the golden calf, *Deut. ix. 20.* and not have rendered him evil for good.

Two things they quarrelled with Moses about, 1. About his marriage: some think a late marriage with a Cushite or Arabian; others because of Zipporah, whom on this occasion they called in scorn an Ethiopian woman; and who, they insinuated, had too great an influence upon Moses in the choice of these seventy elders; perhaps there was some private falling out between Zipporah and Miriam, which occasioned some hot words, and one peevish reflection introduced another, till Moses and Aaron came to be interested. 2. About his government; not the mismanagement of it, but the monopolizing of it, *ver. 2.* *Hath the Lord spoken only by Moses?* Must he only have the choice of the persons on whom the spirit of prophecy shall come, *hath he not spoken also by us?* Might not we have a hand in that affair, and preferred our friends, as well as Moses his? They could not deny that God had spoken by Moses, but it was plain he had sometimes spoken also by them; and that which they intended was to make themselves equal with him, though God had so many ways distinguished him. Note, Striving to be greatest is a sin which easily besets disciples themselves, and it is exceeding sinful. Even those that are well preferred, are seldom pleased, if others be better preferred. Those that excel are commonly envied. 2. The wonderful patience of Moses under this provocation. *The Lord heard it*, *ver. 2.* but Moses himself took no notice of it, for (*ver. 3.*) he was very meek. He had a great deal of reason to resent the affront, it was ill-natured, and ill-timed, when the people were disposed to mutiny, and had lately given him a great deal of vexation with their murmurings; which would be in danger of breaking out again, when thus headed and countenanced by Aaron and Miriam; but he, *as a deaf man, heard not.* When God's honour was concerned, as in the case of the golden calf, no man more zealous than Moses, but when his own honour was touched, no man more meek; as bold as a lion in the cause of God, but as mild as a lamb in his own cause. God's people are the *meek of the earth*, *Zeph. ii. 3.* but some are more remarkable than others for this grace, as Moses, who was thus fitted for the work he was called to, which required all the meekness he had, and sometimes more. And sometimes the unkindness of our friends is a greater trial of our meekness than the malice of our enemies. Christ himself records his own meekness, *Matt. xi. 29.* *I am meek and lowly in heart*; and the copy of meekness Christ has set was without a blot, Moses's was not.

4. And the LORD spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out. 5. And the LORD came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth. 6. And he said, Hear my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make my self known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. 7. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. 8. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my

servant Moses? 9. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them, and he departed.

Moses did not resent the injury done him, nor complained of it to God, or made any appeal to him, but God resented it; he hears all we say in our passion, and is a swift witness of our hasty speeches, which is a reason why we should resolutely bridle our tongues that we speak not ill of others, and why we should patiently stop our ears, and not take notice of it, if others speak ill of us. *I heard not, for thou wilt hear*, Psal. xxxviii. 13, 14, 15. The more silent we are in our own cause, the more is God engaged to plead it. The accused innocent needs to say little, if he knows the judge himself will be his advocate.

(1.) The cause is called, and the parties summoned forthwith to attend at the door of the tabernacle, *ver. 4, 5*. Moses had often shewed himself zealous for God's honour, and now God shewed himself jealous for his reputation; for *those that honour God he will honour*, nor will he ever be behind-hand with any that appear for him. Judges of old sat in the gate of the city to try causes, and so on this occasion the *Shechinah* in the cloud of glory stood at the door of the tabernacle, and Aaron and Miriam, as delinquents, were called to the bar. (2.) Aaron and Miriam are made to know, that as great as they were, they must not pretend to be equal to Moses, nor set up as rivals with him, *ver. 6, 7, 8*. Were they prophets of the Lord? of Moses it might be truly said, He more. 1. It was true, that God put a great deal of honour upon the prophets, however men mocked them and misused them, they were the favourites and intimates of heaven. *God made himself known to them*, either by dreams when they were asleep, or by visions when they were awake, and by them made himself known to others. And those are happy, those are great, truly great, truly happy, to whom God *makes himself known*. Now he doth it, not by dreams and visions as of old, but by the *Spirit of wisdom and revelation*, who makes known those things to babes, which *prophets and kings* desired to see, and might not. Hence in the last days, the days of the Messiah, the *sons and daughters* are said to *prophecy*, Joel ii. 28. because they shall be better acquainted with the mysteries of the kingdom of grace than even the prophets themselves were, see *Heb. i. 1*. 2. Yet the honour put upon Moses was far greater, *ver. 7*. *My servant Moses is not so*, he excelleth them all. To recompence Moses for his meek and patient bearing the affronts which Miriam and Aaron gave him, God not only cleared him, but praised him; and took that occasion to give him an encomium, which remains upon record to his immortal honour; and thus shall they that are reviled and persecuted for righteousness sake have a *great reward in heaven*, Christ will confess them before his Father and the holy angels. (1.) Moses was a man of great integrity, and tried fidelity. He is *faithful in all my house*. This is put first in his character, because grace excels gifts, love excels knowledge, and sincerity in the service of God puts a greater honour upon a man, and recommends him to the divine favour, more than learning, abstruse speculations, and an ability to *speak with tongues*. This is that part of Moses's character which the apostle quotes, when he would shew that Christ was greater than Moses; making it out, that he was so in this chief instance of his greatness, for Moses was faithful only *as a servant*, but Christ *as a son*, *Heb. iii. 2, 5, 6*. God intrusted Moses to deliver his mind in all things to Israel; Israel intrusted him to treat for them with God; and he was faithful to both. He said and did every thing in the management of that great affair as became an honest good man; that aimed at nothing else but the honour of God, and the welfare of Israel. (2.) Moses was therefore honoured with clearer discoveries of God's mind, and a more intimate communion with God, than any other prophet whatsoever. He shall (1.) Hear more from God than any other prophet, more clearly and distinctly; *With him will I speak mouth to mouth, or, face to face*, *Exod. xxxiii. 11*. *as a man speaks to his friend*, whom he discourseth with freely and familiarly, and without any confusion or consternation, such as sometimes other prophets were under; as Ezekiel, and Daniel, and St. John himself, when God spake to them. By other prophets God sent to his people reproofs, and predictions of good or evil, which were properly enough delivered in dark speeches, figures, types, and parables; but by Moses he gave laws to his people, and the institution of holy ordinances, which could by no means be delivered by dark speeches, but must be expressed in the plainest, and most intelligible manner. (2.) He shall see more of God than any other prophet; *the similitude of the Lord shall he behold*, as he hath seen it in Horeb, when God proclaimed his name before him. Yet he saw only the similitude of the Lord, angels and glorified saints *always behold the face of our Father*. Moses had the spirit of prophecy in a way peculiar to himself, and which set him far above all other prophets, yet *he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he*, much more doth our Lord Jesus infinitely excel him, *Heb. iii. 1*.

Now let Miriam and Aaron consider who it was they insulted. *Were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? Against my servant, against Moses?* so it runs in the original. How dare you abuse any servant of mine, especially such a servant as Moses, who is a friend, a confident, and steward of the house? How

durst they speak to the grief and reproach of one whom God had so much to say in the commendation of? Might they not expect that God would resent it, and take it as an affront to himself? Note, We have reason to be afraid of saying or doing any thing against the servants of God, it is at our peril if we do, for God will plead their cause, and reckons that what *touches them, touches the apple of his eye*. It is a dangerous thing to *offend Christ's little ones*, *Matt. xviii. 6*. Those are presumptuous indeed that *are not afraid to speak evil of dignities*, *2 Pet. ii. 10*. 3. God having thus shewed them their fault and folly, he next shews them his displeasure, *ver. 9*. *The anger of the Lord was kindled against them*, of which perhaps some sensible indications were given in the change of the colour of the cloud, or some flashes of lightning from it. But indeed, it was indication enough of his displeasure, that he departed, and would not so much as hear their excuse, for he needed not; *understanding their thoughts afar off*; and thus he would shew that he was displeased. Note, The removal of God's presence from us, is the surest and saddest token of God's displeasure against us. Wo unto us if he depart; and he never departs, till we by our sin and folly drive him from us.

10. And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle, and behold, Miriam became leprous, *white as snow*: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and behold, *she was leprous*. 11. And Aaron said unto Moses, Alas; my lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned. 12. Let her not be as one dead; of whom the flesh is half consumed, when he cometh out of his mothers womb. 13. And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee. 14. ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in again. 15. And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days: and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again. 16. And afterward the people removed from Hazeroth, and pitched in the wilderness in Paran.

Here is, 1. God's judgment upon Miriam; *ver. 10*. *The cloud departed from off that part of the tabernacle*, in token of God's departure, and presently Miriam became leprous; when God goes, evil comes; expect no good when God departs. The leprosy was a disease oft inflicted by the immediate hand of God, as the punishment of some particular sin, as on Gehazi for lying, on Uzziah for invading the priests office, and here on Miriam for scolding, and making mischief among relations. The plague of the leprosy, it is likely, appeared in her face, so that it appeared to all that saw her, she was struck with it; with the worst of it, she was leprous, as snow, not only so white but so soft; the solid flesh losing its consistency, as that which putrefies doth. Her foul tongue (saith bishop Hall) is justly punished with a foul face, and her folly in pretending to be a rival with Moses; is made manifest to all men, for every one sees his face to be glorious, and hers to be leprous. While Moses needs a veil to hide his glory, Miriam needs one to hide her shame. Note, Those distempers which any way deform us, ought to be construed as a rebuke to our pride, and improved for the cure of it, and under such humbling providences we ought to be very humble. It is a sign the heart is hard indeed if the flesh be mortified, and yet the lusts of the flesh remain unmortified. It should seem that this plague upon Miriam was designed for an exposition of the law concerning the leprosy, *Lev. xiii.* for it is referred to, upon the rehearsal of that law, *Deut. xxiv. 8, 9*.

Miriam was struck with a leprosy, but not Aaron, because she was first in the transgression, and God would put a difference between those that mislead, and those that are misled. Aaron's office, though it saved him not from God's displeasure, yet it helped to secure him from this token of his displeasure; it would not only have suspended him for the present from officiating, when (there being no priests but himself and his two sons) he could ill be spared, but it would have rendred him and his office mean, and would have been a lasting blot upon his family. Aaron as priest was to be the judge of the leprosy, and his performing that part of his office upon this occasion, when he *looked upon Miriam, and behold she was leprous*, was a sufficient mortification to him. He was struck through her side, and he could not pronounce her leprous without blushing and trembling, knowing himself to be equally obnoxious. This judgment upon Miriam is improveable by us, as a warning to take heed of putting any affront upon our Lord Jesus. If she was thus chastised for speaking against Moses, what will become of those that sin against Christ? 2. Aaron's submission hereupon, *ver. 11, 12*. he humbles himself to Moses, confesses his fault, and begs pardon. He that but just now joined with his sister in speaking against Moses, here is forced for himself and his sister to make a penitent address to him, and in the highest degree to magnify him, as if he had the power of God to forgive

forgive and heal, whom he had so lately vilified. Note, Those that trample upon the saints and servants of God, will one day be glad to make court to them; at furthest, in the other world, as the foolish virgins to the wise for a little oil, and the rich man to Lazarus for a little water; and perhaps in this world, as Job's friends to him for his prayers, and here Aaron to Moses, *Rev. iii. 9.* In his submission, (1.) He confesseth his own and his sister's sin, *ver. 11.* He speaks respectfully to Moses, of whom he had spoken slightly, calls him his Lord, and now turns the reproach upon himself, speaks as one ashamed of what he had said, *we have sinned, we have done foolishly*; those sin, and do foolishly, who revile and speak evil of any, especially of good people, or of those in authority. Repentance is the unfaying of that which we have said amiss, and better it be unfaid, than that we be undone by it. (2.) He begs Moses's pardon, *lay not this sin upon us.* Aaron was to bring his gift to the altar, but knowing that his brother had something against him, he of all men was concerned to reconcile himself to his brother, that he might be qualified to offer his gift. Some think this speedy submission which God saw him ready to make, was that which prevented his being struck with a leprosy as his sister was. (3.) He recommends the deplorable condition of his sister to Moses's compassionate consideration, *ver. 12. Let her not be as one dead*, i. e. let her not continue so separated from conversation, defiling all she toucheth, and even to putrefy above ground as one dead. He elegantly describes the misery of her case to move his pity. 3. The intercession Moses made for Miriam, *ver. 13.* He cried unto the Lord, with a loud voice, because the cloud, the symbol of his presence, was removed, and stood at some distance; and to express his fervency in this request, *Heal her now, O Lord, I beseech thee.* By this he made it to appear, that he did heartily forgive her the injury she had done him, that he had not accused her to God, nor called for justice against her, so far from that, that when God in tenderness to his honour, had chastised her insolence, he was the first that moved for reversing the judgment. By this example we are taught to pray for them that despitefully use us; and not to take pleasure in the most righteous punishment inflicted either by God or man, on those that have been injurious to us. Jeroboam's withered hand was restored at the special instance and request of the prophet against whom it had been stretched out, *1 Kings xiii. 6.* So Miriam here was healed by the prayer of Moses, whom she had abused, and Abimelech by the prayer of Abraham, *Gen. xx. 7.* Moses might have stood off, and have said, She is served well enough, let her govern her tongue better next time; but not content with being able to say, that he had not prayed for the inflicting of the judgment, he prays earnestly for the removal of it. This pattern of Moses, and that of our Saviour, *Father, forgive them*, we must study to conform to. 4. The accommodating of this matter, so as that mercy and justice might meet together. (1.) Mercy takes place, so far as that Miriam shall be healed; Moses forgives her, and God will. (See *2 Cor. ii. 10.*) But, (2.) Justice takes place, so far as that Miriam shall be humbled, *ver. 14. Let her be shut out from the camp seven days.* That she herself might be made more sensible of her fault, and penitent for it; and that her punishment might be the more publick, and all Israel might take notice of it, and take warning by it not to mutiny. If Miriam the prophetess be put under such marks of humiliation for one hasty word spoken against Moses, what may we expect for our murmurings? *If this be done in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?* See how people debase and diminish themselves by sin, stain their glory, and lay their honour in the dust; when Miriam praised God, we find her at the head of the congregation, and one of the brightest ornaments of it, *Exod. xv. 20.* Now she quarrelled with God, we find her expelled as the filth and off-scouring of it.

A reason is given for her being put out of the camp for seven days, because thus she ought to accept of the punishment of her iniquity. If her father, her earthly father, had but spit in her face, and so signified his displeasure against her, would she not be so troubled and concerned at it, and so sorry that she had deserved it, as to shut her self up for some time in her room, and not come into his presence, or shew her face in the family, being ashamed of her own folly and unhappiness? If such reverence as this be owing to the fathers of our flesh, when they correct us, much more ought we to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of the Father of spirits, *Heb. xii. 9.* Note, When we are under the tokens of God's displeasure for sin, it becomes us to take shame to our selves, and to lie down in that shame, owning, that *to us belongs confusion of face.* If by our own fault and folly we expose ourselves to the reproach and contempt of men, the just censures of the church, or the rebukes of the divine providence, we must confess that our Father justly spits in our face, and be ashamed. 5. The hindrance that this gave to the people's progress, *ver. 15. The people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again.* God did not remove the cloud, and therefore they did not remove their camp. This was intended, (1.) As a rebuke to the people, who were conscious to themselves of having sinned after the similitude of Miriam's transgression, in speaking against Moses: thus far therefore they shall share in her punishment, that it shall retard their march forwards towards Canaan. Many things oppose us, but

nothing hinders us, in the way to heaven, so as sin doth. (2.) As a respect to Miriam. If the camp had removed during the days of her suspension, her trouble and shame had been the greater; therefore in compassion to her they shall stay till her excommunication be taken off, and she taken in again, it is likely, with the usual cleansing lepers. Note, Those that are under censure and rebuke for sin, ought to be treated with a great deal of tenderness, and not be over-loaded, no not with the shame they have deserved, not counted as enemies, *2 Thess. iii. 15.* but forgiven and comforted, *2 Cor. ii. 7.* Sinners must be cast out with grief, and penitents taken in with joy. When Miriam was absolved, and re-admitted, the people went forward into the wilderness of Paran, which joined up to the south border of Canaan, and into that their next remove had been, if they had not put a bar in their own way.

C H A P. XIII.

It is a memorable and very melancholy story which is related in this and the following chapter, of the turning back of Israel from the borders of Canaan, when they were just ready to set foot in it, and the sentencing of them to wander and perish in the wilderness, for their unbelief and murmuring. It is referred to, Psal. xcv. 7, &c. and improved for warning to us christians, Heb. iii. 7, &c. In this chapter we have, 1. The sending of twelve spies before them into Canaan, ver. 1—16. 2. The instructions given to these spies, ver. 17—20. 3. Their executing of their commission according to their instructions, and their return from the search, ver. 21—25. 4. The report they brought back to the camp of Israel, ver. 26—33.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them. 3. And Moses, by the commandment of the LORD, sent them from the wilderness of Paran: all those men were heads of the children of Israel. 4. And these were their names: Of the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur. 5. Of the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori. 6. Of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh. 7. Of the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph. 8. Of the tribe of Ephraim, Oshea the son of Nun. 9. Of the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu. 10. Of the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi. 11. Of the tribe of Joseph, namely, of the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of Sufi. 12. Of the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli. 13. Of the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael. 14. Of the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi. 15. Of the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi. 16. These are the names of the men which Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Oshea the son of Nun, Jehoshua. 17. ¶ And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this way southward, and go up into the mountain: 18. And see the land what it is, and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many; 19. And what the land is that they dwell in, whether it be good or bad; and what cities they be that they dwell in, whether in tents, or in strong holds; 20. And what the land is, whether it be fat or lean, whether there be wood therein or not. And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land (now the time was the time of the first-ripe grapes.)

Here is, 1. Orders given to send spies to search out the land of Canaan. It is here said, God directed Moses to send them, *ver. 1, 2.* but it appears by the repetition of the story afterwards, *Deut. i. 22.* that the motion came originally from the people; they came to Moses, and said, *We will send men before us*; and it was the fruit of their unbelief. They would not take God's word that it was a good land, and that he would without fail put them in possession of it: they could not trust the pillar of cloud and fire to shew them the way to it, but have a better opinion of their own politicks than of God's wisdom. How absurd was it for them to send to spy out a land, which God himself had spied out for them; to enquire the way into it, when God himself had undertaken to shew them the way! But thus we ruin our selves by giving more credit to the reports and representations of sense, than to divine revelation; we walk by sight, not by faith; whereas if we will receive the witness of men, without doubt the witness of God is greater. The people making this motion to Moses, he (perhaps not aware of the unbelief at the bottom of it) consulted God in the case, who bid him gratify the people in this matter, and send spies before them; let them walk in their own counsels. Yet God was no way accessory to the sin that followed, for the sending

sending of these spies was so far from being the cause of the sin, that if the spies had done their duty, and the people theirs, it might have been the confirmation of their faith, and of good service to them. 2. The persons nominated that were to be employed in this service, *ver. 3.* *One of each tribe*, that it might appear to be the act of the people in general; and rulers, persons of figure in their respective tribes, some of the rulers of thousands or hundreds, to put the greater credit upon their embassy: this was designed for the best, but it proved to have this ill effect, that the quality of the persons occasioned the evil report they brought up to be the more credited, and the people to be the more influenced by it. Some think they are all named for the sake of two good ones that were among them, Caleb and Joshua. Notice is taken of the change of Joshua's name upon this occasion, *ver. 16.* He was Moses's minister, but had been employed as general of the forces that were sent out against Amalek, though of the tribe of Ephraim. The name by which he was generally called and known in his own tribe, was Oshea, but Moses called him Joshua, in token of his affection to him, and power over him; and now it should seem he ordered others to call him so, and fixed that to be his name from henceforward. Oshea signifies a prayer for salvation, *Save thou*; Joshua signifies a promise of salvation, *He will save*; in answer to that prayer; so near is the relation between prayers and promises. Prayers prevail for promises, and promises direct and encourage prayers. Some think Moses designed, by taking the first syllable of the name Jehovah, and prefixing it to his name, which turned Hoshea into Jehoshua, to put an honour upon him, and to encourage him in this and all his future services with the assurances of God's presence. Yet after this he is called Hoshea, *Deut. xxxii. 44.* Jesus is the same name with Joshua, and it is the name of our Lord Christ, of whom Joshua was a type, as successor to Moses, Israel's captain, and conqueror of Canaan. There was another of the same name, who was also a type of Christ, *Zech. vi. 11.* Joshua was the saviour of God's people from the powers of Canaan, but Christ is their Saviour from the powers of hell. 3. The instructions given to those spies. They were sent into the land of Canaan, the next way, to traverse the country, and to take account of its present state, *ver. 17.* Two heads of enquiry were given them in charge, (1.) Concerning the land itself; *See what that is*, *ver. 18.* and again, *ver. 19.* see whether it be good or bad, and, *ver. 20.* whether it be fat or lean. All parts of the earth do not share alike in the blessing of fruitfulness; some countries are blest with a richer soil than others: Moses himself was well satisfied that Canaan was a very good land, but he sent these spies to bring an account of it for the satisfaction of the people; as John Baptist sent to Jesus, to ask whether he was the Christ, not to inform himself, but to inform those he sent. They must take notice whether the air was healthful or no, what the soil was, and what the products; and for the better satisfaction of the people, they must bring with them some of the fruits. (2.) Concerning the inhabitants, their number, few or many; their size and stature, whether strong able bodied men, or weak; their habitations, whether they lived in tents or houses, whether in open villages, or in walled towns; whether the woods were standing as in those countries that are uncultivated, through the unskilfulness and slothfulness of the inhabitants; or whether the woods were cut down, and the country made champain, for the convenience of tillage.

These were the things they were to enquire about. Perhaps there had not been of late years such commerce between Egypt and Canaan, as there was in Jacob's time, else they might have informed themselves of these things without sending men on purpose to search. See the advantage we have by books and learning, which acquaints those that are curious and inquisitive with the state of foreign countries, at a much greater distance than Canaan was now from Israel, without this trouble and expence.

Moses dismisseth the spies with this charge; *Be of good courage*; intimating not only that they should be themselves encouraged against the difficulties of this expedition, but that they should bring an encouraging account to the people, and make the best of every thing. It was not only a great undertaking they were put upon, which required good management and resolution, but it was a great trust that was reposed in them, which required that they should be faithful.

21. ¶ So they went up and searched the land, from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath. 22. And they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron; where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi, the children of Anak were (now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) 23. And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff, and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs. 24. The place was called the brook Eshcol, because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence. 25. And they returned from searching of the land after forty days.

We have here a short account of the survey which the spies made of the promised land. 1. They went quite through it, from Zin in the south, to Rehob near Hamath in the north, *ver. 21.* see *Numb. xxxiv. 3, 8.* It is likely they did not go all together in a body, lest they should have been suspected, and taken up; which there would be the more danger of, if the Canaanites knew, (and one would think they could not but know) how near the Israelites were to them; but they divided themselves into several companies, and so passed unsuspected, as wayfaring men. 2. They took particular notice of Hebron, *ver. 22.* probably because near there was the field of Macpelah, where the patriarchs were buried, *Gen. xxiii. 2.* whose dead bodies did as it were keep possession of that land for their posterity. To this sepulchre they made a particular visit, and found the adjoining city in the possession of the sons of Anak, who are here named. In that place where they expected the greatest encouragements, they met with the greatest discouragements. Where the bodies of their ancestors kept possession for them, the giants kept possession against them. In the original it is, they ascended by the south, and came to Hebron, *i. e.* Caleb, say the Jews, in particular, for to his being there, we find express reference, *Josh. xiv. 9, 12.* But that others of the spies were there too, appears by their description of the Anakim, *ver. 33.* 3. They brought a bunch of grapes with them, and some other of the fruits of the land, as a proof of the extraordinary goodness of the country. Probably, they furnished themselves with these fruits, when they were leaving the country and returning. The cluster of grapes was so large, and so heavy, that they hung it upon a bar, and carried it between two of them, *ver. 23, 24.* The place whence they took it was from thence called the valley of the cluster; that famous cluster, which was to Israel, both the earnest and the specimen of all the fruits of Canaan. Such are the present comforts which we have in communion with God, foretastes of the fulness of joy we expect in the heavenly Canaan. We may see by them what heaven is.

26. ¶ And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land. 27. And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and hony; and this is the fruit of it. 28. Nevertheless, the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover, we saw the children of Anak there. 29. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan. 30. And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. 31. But the men that went up with him, said, We be not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we. 32. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched, unto the children of Israel, saying, The land through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it, are men of a great stature. 33. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

It is a wonder how the people of Israel had patience to stay forty days for the return of their spies, when they were just ready to enter Canaan, under all the assurances of success they could have from the divine power, and a constant series of miracles that had hitherto attended them; but they distrusted God's power and promise, and were willing to be held in suspense by their own counsels, rather than be brought to a certainty by God's covenant. How much do we stand in our own light by our unbelief! Well, at length the messengers return, but they agree not in their report.

1. The major part discourage the people from going forwards to Canaan; and justly is Israel left to this temptation, for putting so much confidence in the judgment of men, when they had the word of God to trust to. It is a righteous thing with God to give those up to strong delusions, who will not receive his truth, in the love of it. Observe their report. 1. They cannot deny but that the land of Canaan was a very fruitful land; the bunch of grapes they brought with them was an ocular demonstration of it, *ver. 27.* God had promised them a land flowing with milk and honey, and the evil spies themselves own that it is such a land. Thus even out of the mouth of adversaries will God be glorified, and the truth of his promise attested. And yet afterwards they contradict themselves, when they say, *ver. 32.* It is a land that eats up the inhabitants thereof; as if, though it had milk, and honey, and grapes, yet it wanted other necessary provisions;

visions; some think there was a great plague in the country at the time that they surveyed it, which they ought to have imputed to the wisdom of the divine providence, which thus lessened the numbers of their enemies, to facilitate their conquests; but they invidiously imputed it to the unwholesomeness of the air, and thence took occasion to disparage the country. For this unreasonable fear of a plague in Canaan, they justly were cut off immediately by a plague in the wilderness, chap. xiv. 37. But, 2. They represent the conquest of it as altogether impracticable, and that it was to no purpose to attempt it. The people are strong, *ver. 28.* men of a great stature, *ver. 32.* stronger than we, *ver. 31.* The cities are represented as impregnable fortresses, they are walled, and very great, *ver. 28.* But nothing served their ill purpose more than a description of the giants, which they lay a great stress upon. *We saw the children of Anak there, ver. 28.* and again, *we saw the giants, those men of a prodigious size, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants, ver. 33.* They spake as if they were ready to tremble at the mention of them, as they had done at the sight of them. O these terrible giants! when we were near them, *we were in our own sight as grasshoppers*, not only little and weak, but trembling and daunted; compare, *Job xxxix. 20. Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper?* Nay, and *so we were in their sight*; they looked upon us with as much scorn and disdain, as we did upon them with fear and trembling. So that upon the whole matter they give it in as their judgment, *We be not able to go up against them, ver. 31.* and therefore must think of taking some other course.

Now if they had been to judge only by human probabilities, they could not have been excused from the imputation of cowardice. Were not the hosts of Israel very numerous? Six hundred thousand effective men, well marshalled and modelled, closely embodied, and entirely united in interest and affection, was as formidable an army, as perhaps was ever brought into the field, many a less has done more than perhaps the conquering of Canaan was, witness Alexander's army. Moses, their commander in chief, was wise and brave, and if the people had but put on resolution, and behaved themselves valiantly, what could have stood before them? It is true, the Canaanites were strong, but they were dispersed, *ver. 29. Some dwell in the south, and others in the mountains*; so that by reason of their distance they could not soon get together, and by reason of their divided interests, they could not long keep together, to oppose Israel. The country being plentiful would subsist an army, and though the cities were walled, if they could beat them in the field, the strong holds would fall of course into their hands. And, lastly, as for the giants, their overgrown stature would but make them the better mark, and the bulkiest men have not always the best mettle.

But though they deserved to be posted for cowards, that was not the worst, the scripture brands them for unbelievers. It was not any human probabilities they were required to depend upon, but, 1. They had the manifest and sensible tokens of God's presence with them, and the engagement of his power for them. The Canaanites were stronger than Israel; suppose they were, but were they stronger than the God of Israel? We are not able to deal with them, but is not God Almighty able? Have we not him in the midst of us? Doth not he go before us? And is any thing too hard for him? Were we as grasshoppers before the giants, and are not they less than grasshoppers before God? Their cities are walled against us, but can they be walled against heaven? Besides this, 2. They had had very great experience of the length and strength of God's arm lifted up, and made bare on their behalf. Were not the Egyptians as much stronger than they as the Canaanites were, and yet without a sword drawn by Israel, or a stroke struck, the chariots and horsemen of Egypt were quite routed and ruined; the Amalekites took them at great disadvantages, and yet they were discomfited. Miracles were at this time their daily bread; were there nothing else, an army so well victualled as theirs was, so constantly, so plentifully, and all on free cost, would have a mighty advantage against any other force. Nay, 3. They had had particular promises made them of victory and success in their wars against the Canaanites. God had given Abraham all possible assurances that he would put his seed into possession of that land, *Gen. xv. 18. xvii. 8.* He had expressly promised them by Moses, that he would drive out the Canaanites from before them, *Exod. xxxiii. 2.* and that he would do it by little and little, *Exod. xxxiii. 30.* And after all this, for them to say, *We be not able to go up against them*, was in effect to say, God himself is not able to make his words good. It was in effect to give him the lie, and to tell him he had undertaken more than he could perform. We have a short account of their sin, with which they infected the whole congregation, *Psal. cvi. 24. They despised the land, they believed not his word.* Though upon search they had found it as good as he had said, *a land flowing with milk and honey*; yet they would not believe it as sure as he had said, but despaired of having it, though eternal truth it self had engaged it to them. And now this is the representation of the evil spies. 2. Caleb encouraged them to go forward, though he was seconded by Joshua only, *ver. 30. Caleb stilled the people*, whom he saw already put into a ferment, even before Moses himself, whose shining face could not daunt them, when they began

to grow unruly. Caleb signifies all heart, and he answered his name; was hearty himself, and would have made the people so, if they would have hearkened to him. If Joshua had begun to stem the tide, he would have been suspected of partiality to Moses, whose minister he was, and therefore he prudently left it to Caleb's management at first, who was of the tribe of Judah, the leading tribe, and therefore fittest to be heard. Caleb had seen and observed the strength of the inhabitants as much as his fellows, and upon the whole matter, 1. He speaks very confidently of success, *We are well able to overcome them*, as strong as they are. 2. He animates the people to go on, and his lot lying in the van, he speaks as one resolved to lead them on with bravery, *Let us go up at once, one bold step, one bold stroke more will do our business*; it is all our own, if we have but courage to make it so; *Let us go up and possess it.* He doth not say, *Let us go up and conquer it*, he looks upon that to be as good as done already; but *Let us go up and possess it*; there is nothing to be done but to enter, and take the possession which God our great Lord is ready to give us. Note, *The righteous are bold as a lion.* Difficulties that lie in the way of salvation, dwindle and vanish before a lively active faith in the power and promise of God. *All things are possible*, if they be but promised, *to him that believes.*

C H A P. XIV.

This chapter gives us an account of that fatal quarrel between God and Israel, upon which, for their murmuring and unbelief, he swore in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest. Here is, 1. The mutiny and rebellion of Israel against God, upon the report of the evil spies, *ver. 1—4.* 2. The fruitless endeavour of Moses and Aaron, Caleb and Joshua, to still the tumult, *ver. 5—10.* 3. Their utter ruin justly threatened by an offended God, *ver. 11, 12.* 4. The humble intercession of Moses for them, *ver. 13—19.* 5. A mitigation of the sentence, in answer to the prayer of Moses, they shall not all be cut off, but the decree goes forth ratified with an oath, published to the people, again and again repeated, that this whole generation should perish in the wilderness, and none of them enter Canaan, but Caleb and Joshua only, *ver. 20—35.* 6. The present death of the evil spies, *ver. 36—39.* 7. The rebuke given to them who attempted to go forward, notwithstanding, *ver. 40—45.* And this is written for our admonition, that we fall not after the same example of unbelief.

1. **A**ND all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. 2. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses, and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt, or would God that we had died in this wilderness. 3. And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives, and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? 4. And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.

Here we see what mischief the evil spies made by their unfair representation. We may suppose these twelve that were empannelled to enquire concerning Canaan, had talked it over among themselves before they brought in their report in publick, and Caleb and Joshua it is likely had done their utmost to bring the rest over to be of their mind, and if they would but have agreed that Caleb, according to his post, should have spoke for them all, as their foreman, all had been well; but the evil spies, it should seem, wilfully designed to raise this mutiny, purely in opposition to Moses and Aaron, though they could not propose any advantage to themselves by it, unless they hoped to be captains and commanders of the retreat into Egypt they were now meditating. But what came of it? Here in these verses we find those whom they studied to humour, put into a vexation, and, before the end of the chapter, brought to ruin.

Observe, 1. How the people fretted themselves. *They lifted up their voices, and cried, ver. 1.* giving credit to the report of the spies rather than to the word of God, and imagining their condition desperate, they laid the reins on the neck of their passions, and could keep no manner of temper; like foolish froward children they fall a crying, yet know not what they cried for. It had been time enough to cry out, if the enemies had beaten up their quarters, and they had seen the sons of Anak at the gate of their camp; but they that cried when nothing hurt them, deserved to have something given them to cry for. And as if all had been already gone, they sate them down and wept out that night. Note, Unbelief and distrust of God, is a sin that is its own punishment. Those that do not trust God, are continually vexing themselves. The world's mourners are more than God's, and the sorrow of the world worketh death. 2. How they siew in the face of their governors; murmured against Moses and Aaron, and in them reproached the Lord, *ver. 2, 3.* The congregation of elders began the discontent, *ver. 1.* but the contagion soon spread through the whole camp, for the children of Israel murmured.

sending of these spies was so far from being the cause of the sin, that if the spies had done their duty, and the people theirs, it might have been the confirmation of their faith, and of good service to them. 2. The persons nominated that were to be employed in this service, *ver. 3. One of each tribe*, that it might appear to be the act of the people in general; and rulers, persons of figure in their respective tribes, some of the rulers of thousands or hundreds, to put the greater credit upon their embassy: this was designed for the best, but it proved to have this ill effect, that the quality of the persons occasioned the evil report they brought up to be the more credited, and the people to be the more influenced by it. Some think they are all named for the sake of two good ones that were among them, Caleb and Joshua. Notice is taken of the change of Joshua's name upon this occasion, *ver. 16.* He was Moses's minister, but had been employed as general of the forces that were sent out against Amalek, though of the tribe of Ephraim. The name by which he was generally called and known in his own tribe, was Oshea, but Moses called him Joshua, in token of his affection to him, and power over him; and now it should seem he ordered others to call him so, and fixed that to be his name from henceforward. Oshea signifies a prayer for salvation, *Save thou*; Joshua signifies a promise of salvation, *He will save*; in answer to that prayer; so near is the relation between prayers and promises. Prayers prevail for promises, and promises direct and encourage prayers. Some think Moses designed, by taking the first syllable of the name Jehovah, and prefixing it to his name, which turned Hoshea into Jehoshua, to put an honour upon him, and to encourage him in this and all his future services with the assurances of God's presence. Yet after this he is called Hoshea, *Deut. xxxii. 44.* Jesus is the same name with Joshua, and it is the name of our Lord Christ, of whom Joshua was a type, as successor to Moses, Israel's captain, and conqueror of Canaan. There was another of the same name, who was also a type of Christ, *Zech. vi. 11.* Joshua was the saviour of God's people from the powers of Canaan, but Christ is their Saviour from the powers of hell. 3. The instructions given to those spies. They were sent into the land of Canaan, the next way, to traverse the country, and to take account of its present state, *ver. 17.* Two heads of enquiry were given them in charge, (1.) Concerning the land itself; *See what that is*, *ver. 18.* and again, *ver. 19.* see whether it be good or bad, and, *ver. 20.* whether it be fat or lean. All parts of the earth do not share alike in the blessing of fruitfulness; some countries are blest with a richer soil than others: Moses himself was well satisfied that Canaan was a very good land, but he sent these spies to bring an account of it for the satisfaction of the people; as John Baptist sent to Jesus, to ask whether he was the Christ, not to inform himself, but to inform those he sent. They must take notice whether the air was healthful or no, what the soil was, and what the products; and for the better satisfaction of the people, they must bring with them some of the fruits. (2.) Concerning the inhabitants, their number, few or many; their size and stature, whether strong able bodied men, or weak; their habitations, whether they lived in tents or houses, whether in open villages, or in walled towns; whether the woods were standing as in those countries that are uncultivated, through the unskilfulness and slothfulness of the inhabitants; or whether the woods were cut down, and the country made champain, for the convenience of tillage.

These were the things they were to enquire about. Perhaps there had not been of late years such commerce between Egypt and Canaan, as there was in Jacob's time, else they might have informed themselves of these things without sending men on purpose to search. See the advantage we have by books and learning, which acquaints those that are curious and inquisitive with the state of foreign countries, at a much greater distance than Canaan was now from Israel, without this trouble and expence.

Moses dismisseth the spies with this charge; *Be of good courage*; intimating not only that they should be themselves encouraged against the difficulties of this expedition, but that they should bring an encouraging account to the people, and make the best of every thing. It was not only a great undertaking they were put upon, which required good management and resolution, but it was a great trust that was reposed in them, which required that they should be faithful.

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Now if they had been to judge only by human probabilities, they could not have been excused from the imputation of cowardice. Were not the hosts of Israel very numerous? Six hundred thousand effective men, well marshalled and modelled, closely embodied, and entirely united in interest and affection, was as formidable an army, as perhaps was ever brought into the field, many a less has done more than perhaps the conquering of Canaan was, witness Alexander's army. Moses, their commander in chief, was wise and brave, and if the people had but put on resolution, and behaved themselves valiantly, what could have stood before them? It is true, the Canaanites were strong, but they were dispersed, *ver. 29. Some dwell in the south, and others in the mountains*; so that by reason of their distance they could not soon get together, and by reason of their divided interests, they could not long keep together, to oppose Israel. The country being plentiful would subsist an army, and though the cities were walled, if they could beat them in the field, the strong holds would fall of course into their hands. And, lastly, as for the giants, their overgrown stature would but make them the better mark, and the bulkiest men have not always the best mettle.

But though they deserved to be posted for cowards, that was not the worst, the scripture brands them for unbelievers. It was not any human probabilities they were required to depend upon, but, 1. They had the manifest and sensible tokens of God's presence with them, and the engagement of his power for them. The Canaanites were stronger than Israel; suppose they were, but were they stronger than the God of Israel? We are not able to deal with them, but is not God Almighty able? Have we not him in the midst of us? Doth not he go before us? And is any thing too hard for him? Were we as grasshoppers before the giants, and are not they less than grasshoppers before God? Their cities are walled against us, but can they be walled against heaven? Besides this, 2. They had had very great experience of the length and strength of God's arm lifted up, and made bare on their behalf. Were not the Egyptians as much stronger than they as the Canaanites were, and yet without a sword drawn by Israel, or a stroke struck, the chariots and horsemen of Egypt were quite routed and ruined; the Amalekites took them at great disadvantages, and yet they were discomfited. Miracles were at this time their daily bread; were there nothing else, an army so well victualled as theirs was, so constantly, so plentifully, and all on free cost, would have a mighty advantage against any other force. Nay, 3. They had had particular promises made them of victory and success in their wars against the Canaanites. God had given Abraham all possible assurances that he would put his seed into possession of that land, *Gen. xv. 18. xvii. 8.* He had expressly promised them by Moses, that he would drive out the Canaanites from before them, *Exod. xxxiii. 2.* and that he would do it by little and little, *Exod. xxiii. 30.* And after all this, for them to say, *We be not able to go up against them*, was in effect to say, God himself is not able to make his words good. It was in effect to give him the lie, and to tell him he had undertaken more than he could perform. We have a short account of their sin, with which they infected the whole congregation, *Psal. cvi. 24. They despised the land, they believed not his word.* Though upon search they had found it as good as he had said, *a land flowing with milk and honey*; yet they would not believe it as sure as he had said, but despaired of having it, though eternal truth it self had engaged it to them. And now this is the representation of the evil spies. 2. Caleb encouraged them to go forward, though he was seconded by Joshua only, *ver. 30. Caleb stilled the people*, whom he saw already put into a ferment, even before Moses himself, whose shining face could not daunt them, when they began

to grow unruly. Caleb signifies all heart, and he answered his name; was hearty himself, and would have made the people so, if they would have hearkened to him. If Joshua had begun to stem the tide, he would have been suspected of partiality to Moses, whose minister he was, and therefore he prudently left it to Caleb's management at first, who was of the tribe of Judah, the leading tribe, and therefore fittest to be heard. Caleb had seen and observed the strength of the inhabitants as much as his fellows, and upon the whole matter, 1. He speaks very confidently of success, *We are well able to overcome them*, as strong as they are. 2. He animates the people to go on, and his lot lying in the van; he speaks as one resolved to lead them on with bravery, *Let us go up at once, one bold step, one bold stroke more will do our business*; it is all our own, if we have but courage to make it so; *Let us go up and possess it.* He doth not say, *Let us go up and conquer it*, he looks upon that to be as good as done already; but *Let us go up and possess it*; there is nothing to be done but to enter, and take the possession which God our great Lord is ready to give us. Note, *The righteous are bold as a lion.* Difficulties that lie in the way of salvation, dwindle and vanish before a lively active faith in the power and promise of God. *All things are possible*, if they be but promised, to him that believes.

C H A P. XIV.

This chapter gives us an account of that fatal quarrel between God and Israel, upon which, for their murmuring and unbelief, he swore in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest. Here is, 1. The mutiny and rebellion of Israel against God, upon the report of the evil spies, *ver. 1—4.* 2. The fruitless endeavour of Moses and Aaron, Caleb and Joshua, to still the tumult, *ver. 5—10.* 3. Their utter ruin justly threatened by an offended God, *ver. 11, 12.* 4. The humble intercession of Moses for them, *ver. 13—19.* 5. A mitigation of the sentence, in answer to the prayer of Moses, they shall not all be cut off, but the decree goes forth ratified with an oath, published to the people, again and again repeated, that this whole generation should perish in the wilderness, and none of them enter Canaan, but Caleb and Joshua only, *ver. 20—35.* 6. The present death of the evil spies, *ver. 36—39.* 7. The rebuke given to them who attempted to go forward, notwithstanding, *ver. 40—45.* And this is written for our admonition, that we fall not after the same example of unbelief.

1. **A**ND all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. 2. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses, and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt, or would God that we had died in this wilderness. 3. And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives, and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? 4. And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.

Here we see what mischief the evil spies made by their unfair representation. We may suppose these twelve that were empannelled to enquire concerning Canaan, had talked it over among themselves before they brought in their report in publick, and Caleb and Joshua it is likely had done their utmost to bring the rest over to be of their mind, and if they would but have agreed that Caleb, according to his post, should have spoke for them all, as their foreman, all had been well; but the evil spies, it should seem, wilfully designed to raise this mutiny, purely in opposition to Moses and Aaron, though they could not propose any advantage to themselves by it, unless they hoped to be captains and commanders of the retreat into Egypt they were now meditating. But what came of it? Here in these verses we find those whom they studied to humour, put into a vexation, and, before the end of the chapter, brought to ruin.

Observe, 1. How the people fretted themselves. *They lifted up their voices, and cried, ver. 1.* giving credit to the report of the spies rather than to the word of God, and imagining their condition desperate, they laid the reins on the neck of their passions, and could keep no manner of temper; like foolish forward children they fall a crying, yet know not what they cried for. It had been time enough to cry out, if the enemies had beaten up their quarters, and they had seen the sons of Anak at the gate of their camp; but they that cried when nothing hurt them, deserved to have something given them to cry for. And as if all had been already gone, they sate them down and wept out that night. Note, Unbelief and distrust of God, is a sin that is its own punishment. Those that do not trust God, are continually vexing themselves. The world's mourners are more than God's, and the sorrow of the world worketh death. 2. How they siew in the face of their governors; murmured against Moses and Aaron, and in them reproached the Lord, *ver. 2, 3.* The congregation of elders began the discontent, *ver. 1.* but the contagion soon spread through the whole camp, for the children of Israel murmured.

Jealousies and discontents spread like wild-fire among the unthinking multitude, who are easily taught to *despise dominions, and to speak evil of dignities*. 1. They look back with a causeless quarrel. They wish they had died in Egypt with the first-born that were slain there; or in the wilderness, with those that lately died of the plague for lusting. See the prodigious madness of unbridled passions, which make men prodigal even of that which nature accounts most dear, life itself. Never were so many months spent so pleasantly, as these which they had spent since they came out of Egypt, loaded with honours, compassed with favours, and continually entertained with something or other that was surprizing; and yet, as if all these things had not made it worth their while to live, they wished they had died in Egypt. And such a light opinion had they of God's tremendous judgments executed on their neighbours for their sin, that they wish they had shared with them in their plagues, rather than run the hazard of making a descent upon Canaan. They wish rather to die criminals under God's justice, than live conquerors in his favour. Some read it, *O that we had died in Egypt, or in this wilderness, O that we might die!* They wish to die, for fear of dying; and have not sense enough to reason as the poor lepers, when rather than die upon the spot, they ventured into an enemies camp, *If they kill us, we shall but die*, 2 Kings vii. 4. How base were the spirits of these degenerate Israelites! who, rather than die (if it come to the worst) like soldiers in the bed of honour, with their swords in their hands, desire to die like rotten sheep in the wilderness. 2. They look forward with a groundless despair, taking it for granted, *ver. 3.* that if they went on they must fall by the sword, and pretend to lay the cause of their fear upon the great care they had for their wives and children, who they conclude will be a prey to the Canaanites. And here is a most wicked blasphemous reflection upon God himself, as if he had brought them hither on purpose that they might fall by the sword, and that their wives and children, those poor innocents, should be a prey. Thus do they in effect, charge that God, who is love itself, with the worst of malice, and eternal truth, with the basest hypocrisy; suggesting, that all the kind things he had said to them, and done for them hitherto, were intended only to decoy them into a snare, and to cover a secret design carried on all along to ruin them. Daring impudence! But what will not that tongue speak against heaven, that is set on fire of hell! The devil keeps up his interest in the hearts of men, by insinuating to them ill thoughts of God, as if he desired the death of sinners, and delighted in the hardships and sufferings of his own servants, whereas he knows his thoughts to us-ward (whether we know them so or no) to be *thoughts of good, and not of evil*, Jer. xxix. 11. 3. How they came at last to this desperate resolve, that, instead of going forward to Canaan, they would go back again to Egypt. The motion is first made by way of query only, *ver. 3. Were it not better for us to return into Egypt?* But the ferment being high, and the spirits of the people being disposed to entertain any thing that was perverse, it soon ripened to a resolution, without a debate; *ver. 4. Let us make a captain, and return to Egypt*; and it is lamented long after, *Neh. ix. 17. That in their rebellion they did appoint a captain to return to their bondage*; for they knew Moses would not be their captain in this retreat.

Now, 1. It was the greatest folly in the world to wish themselves in Egypt, or to think, if they were there, it would be better with them than it was. If they durst not go forward to Canaan, yet better be as they were, than go back to Egypt. What did they want? What had they to complain of? They had plenty, and peace, and rest, were under a good government, had good company, had the tokens of God's presence with them, and enough to make them easy even in the wilderness, if they had but hearts to be content. But whither were they thus fond to go to mend themselves? to Egypt? Had they so soon forgotten the fore bondage they were in there? Would they be again under the tyranny of their task-masters, and at the drudgery of making brick? And after all the plagues which Egypt had suffered for their sakes, could they expect any better treatment there than they had formerly, and nor rather much worse? In how little time (not a year and a half) have they forgot all the sighs of their bondage, and all the songs of their deliverance! Like brute beasts, they mind only that which is present, and their memories, with the other powers of reason, are sacrificed to their passions. See *Psal. cvi. 7.* We find it threatned, *Deut. xxviii. 68.* as the compleating of their misery, that they should be brought into Egypt again, and yet that is it they here wish for. Sinners are enemies to themselves; and those that walk not in God's counsels, consult their own mischief and ruin. 2. It was a most senseless ridiculous thing to talk of returning thither through the wilderness. Could they expect that God's cloud would lead them, or his manna attend them? And if they did not, the thousands of Israel must unavoidably be lost and perish in the wilderness. Suppose the difficulties of conquering Canaan were as great as they imagined, those of returning to Egypt were much greater. In this let us see, 1. The folly of discontent and impatience, under the crosses of our outward condition. We are uneasy at that which is, complain of our place and lot, and we would shift: but is there any place or condition in this world, that has not something in it to make

us uneasy; if we are disposed to be so. The way to better our condition, is to get our spirits into a better frame; and instead of asking, were it not better to go to Egypt? ask, were it not better to be content, and make the best of that which is? 2. The folly of apostasy from the ways of God. Heaven is the Canaan set before us, a land flowing with milk and honey: those that bring up never so ill a report of it, cannot but say that it is indeed a good land, only it is hard to get to it; strict and serious godliness is looked upon as an impracticable thing, and this deters many who begun well from going on; rather than undergo the imaginary hardships of a religious life, they run themselves upon the certain fatal consequences of a sinful course; and so they transcribe the folly of Israel, who when they were within a step of Canaan would make a captain, and return to Egypt.

5. Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. 6. ¶ And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes. 7. And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. 8. If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. 9. Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not. 10. But all the congregation bade stone them with stones: and the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation, before all the children of Israel.

The friends of Israel here interpose to save them, if possible, from ruining themselves, but in vain. The physicians of their state, would have healed them, but they would not be healed; their watchmen gave them warning, but they would not take the warning, and so their blood is upon their own heads.

1. The best endeavours were used to still the tumult, and if now at last they would have understood the things that belonged to their peace, all the following mischief had been prevented. (1.) Moses and Aaron did their part, *ver. 5.* though it was against them that they murmured, *ver. 2.* yet they bravely overlooked the affront and injury done them, and approve themselves faithful friends to those who were outrageous enemies to them. The clamour and noise of the people was so great, that Moses and Aaron could not be heard; should they order any of their servants to proclaim silence, the angry multitude would perhaps be the more clamorous, and therefore to gain audience in the sight of all the assembly, they fell on their faces, thus expressing: (1.) Their humble prayers to God to still the noise of this sea, the noise of its waves, even the tumult of the people. (2.) The great trouble and concern of their own spirits; they fell down as men astonished and even thunder-struck, amazed to see a people throw away their own mercies; to see those so ill humoured who were so well taught. And, (3.) Their great earnestness with the people to cease their murmurings; they hoped to work upon them by this humble posture, and to prevail with them not to persist in their rebellion; Moses and Aaron beseech them, as though by them God himself did beseech them, to be reconciled unto God. What they said to them, Moses relates in the repetition of this story, *Deut. i. 29, 30. Be not afraid, the Lord your God shall fight for you.* Note, Those that are zealous friends to precious souls, will stoop to any thing for their salvation. Moses and Aaron, notwithstanding the posts of honour they are in, prostrate themselves to the people to beg of them not to ruin themselves. (2.) Caleb and Joshua did their part, rent their clothes in a holy indignation at the sin of the people; and a holy dread of the wrath of God, which they saw ready to break out against them: it was the greater trouble to those good men, because the tumult was occasioned by those spies with whom they had been joined in commission; and therefore they thought themselves obliged to do what they could to still the storm, which their fellows had raised. No reasoning could be more pertinent and pathetic than theirs here, *ver. 7, 8, 9.* and they spake as with authority. 1. They assured them of the goodness of the land they had surveyed, and that it was really worth venturing for, and not a land that eat up the inhabitants, as the evil spies had represented it. It is an exceeding good land, *ver. 7.* it is very, very good; so the word is; so that they had no reason to *despise this pleasant land*. Note, If men were but thoroughly convinced of the desirableness of the gains of religion, they would not stick at the services of it. 2. They made nothing of the difficulties that seemed to lie in the way of their gaining the possession of it. *Fear not the people of the land*, *ver. 9.* Whatever formidable ideas have been given you of them, the lion is not so fierce as he is painted; *they are bread for us*, i. e. they are set before us rather to be fed upon, than to be fought with; so easily, so pleasantly, and with so much advantage to ourselves, shall we master them. Pharaoh is said to have been given them for meat, *Psal. lxxiv. 14.* and the Canaanites will be so too. They shew, that whatever was suggested to the contrary, the advantage

vantage was clear on Israel's side. For, (1.) Though the Canaanites dwell in walled cities, they are naked, *their defence was departed from them*; that common providence which preserves the rights of nations, has abandoned them, and will be no shelter or protection to them. The other spies took notice of their strength, but those of their wickedness; and from thence inferred that God had forsaken them, and therefore *their defence was departed*. No people can be safe, when they have provoked God to leave them. (2.) Though Israel dwell in tents, they are fortified, *The Lord is with us*, and his name is a strong tower; *fear them not*. Note, While we have the presence of God with us, we need not fear the most powerful force against us. 3. They shewed them plainly, that all the danger they were in was from their own discontents, and that they would deal well enough with all their enemies, if they did not make God their enemy. On this point alone the cause would turn, *ver. 8. If the Lord delight in us*, as certainly he doth, and will if we do not provoke him; *he will bring us into this good land*; we shall without fail get it in possession by his favour, and the light of his countenance, (*Psal. xlv. 5.*) if we do not forfeit his favour, and by our own follies turn away our own mercies. It is come to this issue, *ver. 9. Only rebel not ye against the Lord*. Note, Nothing can ruin sinners, but their own rebellion. If God leave them, it is because they drive him from them; and they die because they will die. None are excluded the heavenly Canaan, but those that exclude themselves. And now, could the case have been made more plain, could it have been urged more close? But what was the effect? 2. It was all to no purpose; they were deaf to this fair reasoning, nay, they were exasperated by it, and grew more outrageous. *ver. 10. All the congregation bade stone them with stones*. The rulers of the congregation, and the great men (so bishop Patrick) ordered the common people to fall upon them, and knock their brains out. Their case was sad indeed, when their leaders thus *caused them to err*. Note, It is common for those whose hearts are *fully set in them to do evil*, to rage at those who give them good counsel. They who hate to be reformed, hate those that would reform them, and count them their enemies, because they tell them the truth. Thus early did Israel begin to misuse the prophets, and *stone those that were sent to them*, and this was it that *filled the measure of their sin*, *Matt. xxiii. 37*. Stone them with stones: Why, what evil have they done? No crime can be laid to their charge, but the truth is, *those two witnesses tormented them* that were obstinate in their infidelity, *Rev. xi. 10.*

Caleb and Joshua had but just said, *The Lord is with us, fear them not*, *ver. 9.* and if Israel will not apply those encouraging words to their own fears, they that said them know how to encourage themselves with them against this enraged multitude that spake of stoning them; as David in a like case, *1 Sam. xxx. 6*. Those that cannot prevail to edify others with their counsels and comforts, should endeavour at least to edify themselves. Caleb and Joshua knew they appeared for God and his glory, and therefore doubted not but God would appear for them and their safety. And they were not disappointed, for immediately *the glory of the Lord appeared*, to the terror and confusion of those that were for stoning the servants of God. When they reflected upon God, *ver. 3.* his glory appeared not to silence their blasphemies, but when they threatened Caleb and Joshua, *they touched the apple of his eye*, and his glory appeared immediately. Note, Those who faithfully expose themselves for God, are sure to be taken under his special protection, and shall be hid from the rage of men, either under heaven or in heaven.

11. ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them? 12. I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they. 13. ¶ And Moses said unto the LORD, Then the Egyptians shall hear it (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them) 14. And they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that thou LORD art among this people, that thou LORD art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by day-time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. 15. Now if thou shalt kill all this people as one man; then the nations which have heard the fame of thee, will speak, saying, 16. Because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land which he swore unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness. 17. And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my LORD be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying, 18. The LORD is long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation. 19. Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according unto the great-

ness of thy mercy; and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt, even until now.

Here is, 1. The righteous sentence which God gave against Israel for their murmuring and unbelief, which though afterwards mitigated, shews what was the desert of their sin, and the demand of injured justice; and what would have been done, if Moses had not interposed. When the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle, we may suppose Moses took it for a call to him immediately to come and attend there, as before the tabernacle was erected he went up to the mount in a like case, *Exod. xxxii. 30*. Thus while the people was studying to disgrace him, God publicly put honour upon him, as the man of his counsel. Now here we are told, what God said to him there. 1. He shewed him the great evil of the people's sin, *ver. 11*. What passed between God and Israel went through the hands of Moses, when they were displeased with God they told Moses of it, *ver. 2*. When God was displeased with them he told Moses too, *revealing his secret to his servant the prophet*, *Amos iii. 7*. Two things God justly complains of to Moses, (1.) Their sin. They provoke me: or, as the word signifies, they reject, reproach, despise me, for *they will not believe me*. That was the bitter root which bore the gall and wormwood. It was their unbelief that made this a day of provocation in the wilderness, *Heb. iii. 8*. Note, Distrust of God and his power and promise, is it self a very great provocation, and at the bottom of many other provocations. Unbelief is a great sin, *1 Joh. v. 10.* and a root sin, *Heb. iii. 12*. (2.) Their continuance in it: How long will they do so! Note, The God of heaven keeps an account how long sinners persist in their provocations, and the longer it is, the more he is displeased. The aggravations of their sin were, 1. Their relation to God. *This people*, a peculiar people, a professing people. The nearer any are to God in name and profession, the more is he provoked by their sins, especially their unbelief. 2. The experience they had had of God's power and goodness, in *all the signs* which he had shewed among them, by which one would think he had effectually obliged them to trust him and follow him. The more God has done for us, the greater is the provocation if we distrust him. 2. He shewed him the sentence which justice passed upon them for it, *ver. 12*. What remains now, but that I should make a full end of them? It will be soon done, *I will smite them with the pestilence*, not leave a man of them alive, but wholly blot out their name and race, and so disinherit them, and be no more troubled with them. *Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries*. They wish to die, and let them die; and neither root nor branch be left of them. Such rebellious children deserve to be disinherited. And if it be asked, What will become of God's covenant with Abraham then? Here is an answer, It shall be preserved in the family of Moses, *I will make of thee a greater nation*. Thus, (1.) God would try Moses, whether he still continued the same affection for Israel, he had formerly expressed upon a like occasion, in preferring their interests before the advancement of his own family; and it proved Moses was still of the same publick spirit, and could not bear the thought of raising his own name, upon the ruin of the name of Israel. (2.) God would teach us, that he will not be a loser by the ruin of sinners. If Adam and Eve had been cut off and disinherited, he could have made another Adam and another Eve, and have glorified his mercy in them, as here in Moses, though Israel were ruined. 2. The humble intercession Moses made for them. Their sin had made a fatal breach in the wall of their defence, at which destruction had certainly entered, if Moses had not seasonably stepped in, and made it good. Here he was a type of Christ, who interceded for his persecutors, and *prayed for them that despitefully used him*, leaving us an example to his own rule, *Matt. v. 44*. 1. The prayer of his petition is in one word, *Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people*, *ver. 19*. i. e. do not bring upon them the ruin they deserve. This was Christ's prayer for those that crucified him, *Father, forgive them*. The pardon of a national sin, as such, consists in the turning away of the national punishment; and that is it for which Moses is here so earnest. 2. The pleas are many; and strongly urged. 1. He insists most upon the plea that is taken from the glory of God, *ver. 13—16*. with this he begins and somewhat abruptly, taking occasion from that dreadful word, *I will disinherit them*; Lord, (saith he) *then the Egyptians shall hear it*. God's honour lay nearer his heart, than any interests of his own. Observe, how he orders this cause before God. 1. He pleads that the eyes both of Egypt and Canaan were upon them, and great expectations were raised concerning them. They could not but have heard, *that thou, Lord, art among this people*, *ver. 14*. The neighbouring countries rung of it, how much this people were the particular care of heaven, so as never any people under the sun were. 2. That if they should be cut off, great notice would be taken of it. *The Egyptians will hear it*, *ver. 13*. for they have their spies among us, and they will tell it to the inhabitants of the land, *ver. 14*. for there was great correspondence between Egypt and Canaan, though not by the way of this wilderness. If this people that has made so great a noise be all consumed, and their mighty pretensions come to nothing, but go out in a snuff, it will be told with pleasure in Gath, and published in the streets of Ashkelon; and what construction will they put upon

upon it? It will be impossible to make them understand it as an act of God's justice, and so redounding to God's honour; *brutish men know not this*, *Psal. xcii. 6.* but they will impute it to the failing of God's power, and so turn it to his reproach, *ver. 16.* They will say, he slew them in the wilderness, because he was not able to bring them to Canaan, his arm being shortened, and his stock of miracles being spent. Now, Lord, let not one attribute be glorified at the expence of another; rather let mercy rejoice against judgment, than that almighty power should be impeached. Note, The best pleas in prayer are those that are taken from God's honour; for they agree with the first petition of the Lord's prayer, *Hallowed be thy name. Do not disgrace the throne of thy glory.* God pleads it with himself, *Deut. xxxii. 27. I feared the wrath of the enemy*; and we should use it as an argument with our selves, to walk so in every thing as to *give no occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme*, *1 Tim. vi. 1.* 2. He pleads God's proclamation of his name at Horeb; *ver. 17, 18. Let the power of my Lord be great*: power is here put for pardoning mercy; it is his power over his own anger. If he should destroy them, God's power would be questioned; if he should continue and compleat their salvation, notwithstanding the difficulties that arose, not only from the strength of their enemies, but from their own provocations, this would greatly magnify the divine power: what cannot he do who could make so weak a people conquerors, and such an unworthy people favourites? The more danger there is of others reproaching God's power, the more desirous we should be to see it glorified. To enforce this petition, he refers himself to the word which God had spoken, *The Lord is long-suffering and of great mercy.* God's goodness had there been spoken of as his glory; God had gloried in it, *Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.* Now here he prays, that upon this occasion he would glorify it. Note, We must take our encouragement in prayer from the word of God, upon which he hath caused us to hope, *Psal. cxix. 49. Lord, be and do according as thou hast spoken*; for hast thou spoken, and wilt thou not make it good? Three things God had solemnly made a declaration of, which Moses here fastens upon, and improves for the enforcing of his petition. 1. The goodness of God's nature in general; that he is long-suffering, or slow to anger, and of great mercy; not soon provoked, but tender and compassionate towards offenders. 2. His readiness in particular to pardon sin, *forgiving iniquity and transgression*, sins of all sorts. 3. His lothness to proceed to extremity, even then when he doth punish. For in this sense the following words may be read, *That will by no means make quite desolate, in visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children.* God had indeed said in the second commandment that he would thus visit, but here he promises not to make a full end of families, churches, and nations at once; and so it was very applicable to this occasion, for Moses cannot beg that God would not at all punish this sin, it would be too great an encouragement to rebellion, if he should set no mark of his displeasure upon it; but that he would not *kill all this people as one man*, *ver. 15.* He doth not ask, that they may not be corrected, but that they may not be disinherited. And this proclamation of God's name was the more apposite to his purpose, because it was made upon occasion of the pardoning of their sin in making the golden calf. This sin they were now fallen into was bad enough, but it was not idolatry. 3. He pleads past experience, *ver. 19. As thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt.* This seemed to make against him; why should they be forgiven any more, who after they had been so oft forgiven, revolted yet more and more, and seemed hardened and encouraged in their rebellion, by the lenity and patience of their God, and the frequent pardons they had obtained; and among men it would have been thought impolitickly taken notice of in a request of this nature, and improveable against the petitioner: but as in other things, so in pardoning sin, God's thoughts and ways are infinitely above ours, *Isa. lv. 9.* Moses looks upon it as a good plea, *Lord, forgive as thou hast forgiven.* It will be no more a reproach to thy justice, nor no less the praise of thy mercy to forgive now, than it has been formerly. Therefore the *sons of Jacob are not consumed*, because they have to do with a *God that changeth not*, *Mal. iii. 6.*

20. And the LORD said, I have pardoned according to thy word: 21. But *as truly as I live*, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD. 22. Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles which I did in Egypt, and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; 23. Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me, see it: 24. But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully; him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it. 25. (Now the Amalekites, and the Canaanites dwelt in the valley) To morrow turn you, and get you into the wilderness, by the way of the Red sea. 26. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron, saying, 27. How

long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. 28. Say unto them, *As truly as I live*, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you. 29. Your carcases shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbred of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me, 30. Doubtless ye shall not come into the land concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. 31. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. 32. But *as for* you, your carcases they shall fall in this wilderness. 33. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcases be wasted in the wilderness. 34. After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, *even* forty days (each day for a year) shall ye bear your iniquities, *even* forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise. 35. I the LORD have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.

We have here God's answer to the prayer of Moses, which sings both of mercy and judgment. It is given privately to Moses, *ver. 20—25.* and then directed to be made publick to the people, *ver. 26—35.* The frequent repetitions of the same things in it, speak these resolves to be unalterable. Let us see the particulars.

1. The extremity of the sentence is recorded from *ver. 20. I have pardoned*, so as not to cut them all off at once, and disinherit them. See the power of prayer, and the delight God takes in putting an honour upon it. He designed a pardon, but Moses shall have the praise of obtaining it by prayer; it shall be done *according to thy word*; thus, as a prince he hath power with God and prevails. See what countenance and encouragement God gives to our intercessions for others, that we may be publick spirited in prayer. Here is a whole nation rescued from ruin by the effectual fervent prayer of one righteous man. See how ready God is to forgive sin, and how easy to be intreated. *Pardon*, saith Moses, *ver. 19. I have pardoned*, saith God, *ver. 20.* David found him thus swift to shew mercy, *Psal. xxxii. 5. He deals not with us after our sins.* 2. The glorifying of God's name is in the general resolved upon, *ver. 21.* It is said, it is sworn, *All the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.* Moses in his prayer had shewed a great concern for the glory of God; Let me alone, saith God, to secure that effectually, and to advance it, by this dispensation. All the world shall see how God hates sin even in his own people, and will reckon for it, and yet how gracious and merciful he is, and how slow to anger. Thus when our Saviour prayed, *Father, glorify thy name*; he was immediately answered, *I have glorified it; and I will glorify it yet again*, *Joh. xii. 28.* Note, Those that sincerely seek God's glory, may be sure of what they seek. God having turned this prayer for the glorifying of himself into a promise, we may turn it into praise, in comfort with the angels, *Isa. vi. 4. The earth is full of his glory.* 3. The sin of this people which provoked God to proceed against them is here aggravated, *ver. 22, and 27.* it is not made worse than really it was, but is shewed to be exceeding sinful. It was an evil congregation, each bad, but all together in congregation, very bad. 1. They tempted God, tempted his power, whether he could help them in their straits, his goodness whether he would, and his faithfulness whether his promise would be performed. They tempted his justice whether he would resent their provocations, and punish them or no. They dared him; and in effect challenged him, as God doth the idols, *Isa. xli. 23. to do good, or do evil.* 2. They murmured against him. This is much insisted on, *ver. 27.* As they questioned what he would do, so they quarrelled with him for every thing he did or had done; continually fretting and finding fault. It doth not appear that they murmured at any of the laws or ordinances that God gave them, they proved a heavy yoke, but they murmured at the conduct they were under, and the provision made for them. Note, It is much easier to bring our selves to the external services of religion, and observe all the formalities of devotion, than to live a life of dependence upon and submission to the divine providence, in the course of our conversation. 3. They did this after they had seen God's miracles in Egypt, and in the wilderness, *ver. 2.* They would not believe their own eyes, which were witnesses for God, that he was in the midst of them of a truth. 4. They had repeated the provocations ten times, *i. e.* very often: the Jewish writers reckon this exactly the tenth time that the body of the congregation had provoked God. First, at the Red sea, *Exod. xiv. 11.* In Marah, *Exod. xv. 23.* In the wilderness of Sin, *Exod. xvi. 2.* Twice about manna, *Exod. xvi. 20, 27.* At Rephidim, chap. xvii. 1. The golden calf. Then at Taberah; then at Kibroth Hattaavah,

Hattaavah; *Numb. xi.* And so this was the tenth. Note, God keeps an account how oft we repeat our provocations; and will sooner or later set them in order before us. 5. They had not hearkned to his voice; though he had again and again admonished them of their sin. 4. The sentence passed upon them for this sin. (1.) That they should not see the promised land, *ver. 23.* nor come unto it, *ver. 30.* He swears in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest, *Psal. xcv. ult.* Note, Unbelief of the promise, is a forfeiture of the benefit of it. Those that *despise the pleasant land* shall be shut out of it. The promise of God should be fulfilled to their posterity, but not to them. (2.) That they should immediately turn back into the wilderness, *ver. 25.* Their next remove should be a retreat; they must face about, and instead of going forward to Canaan, on the very borders of which they now were, they must withdraw towards the Red sea again. *To-morrow turn ye.* That is, very shortly you shall be brought back to that vast howling wilderness which you are so weary of. And it is time to shift for your own safety, for the Amalekites lie in wait in the valley, ready to attack you, if you march forward; of them they had been distrustfully afraid, *chap. xiii. 29.* and now with them God justly frightened them. *The fear of the wicked shall come upon him.* (3.) That all those who were now grown up to mens estate should die in the wilderness, not all at once, but by degrees. They wished they might die in the wilderness, and God said Amen to their passionate wish, and made their sin their ruin, *snares them in the words of their mouth, and caused their own tongue to fall upon them,* took them at their word, and determined that their carcases should fall in the wilderness, *ver. 28, 29.* and again, *ver. 32,—35.* See with what contempt they are spoken of, now they had by their sin made themselves vile; the mighty men of valour were but carcases, when the Spirit of the Lord was departed from them. They were all as dead men. Their fathers had such a value for Canaan, that they desired to have their dead bodies carried thither to be buried, in token of their dependence upon God's promise that they should have that land for a possession; but these having despised that good land, and disbelieved the promise of it, shall not have the honour to be buried in it, but shall have their graves in the wilderness. (4.) That in pursuance of this sentence they should wander to and fro in the wilderness, like travellers that have lost themselves, for forty years; *i. e.* so long as to make it full forty years from their coming out of Egypt to their entrance into Canaan, *ver. 33, 34.* Thus long they were kept wandring, 1. To answer the number of the days in which the spies were searching the land. They were content to wait forty days for the testimony of men, because they could not take God's word; and therefore justly are they kept forty years waiting for the performance of God's promise. 2. That hereby they might be brought to repentance, and find mercy with God in the other world, whatever became of them in this. Now they had time to bethink themselves, and to consider their ways; and the inconveniencies of the wilderness would help to humble them and prove them, and shew them what was in their heart, *Deut. viii. 2.* Thus long they bore their iniquities, feeling the weight of God's wrath in the punishment. They were made to groan under the burthen of their own sin that brought it upon them, which was too heavy for them to bear. 3. That they might sensibly feel what a dangerous thing it is for God's covenant people to break with him. *Ye shall know my breach of promise,* both the causes of it, that it is procured by your sin, for God never leaves any till they first leave him; and the consequences of it, that it will produce your ruin; you are quite undone when you are thrown out of covenant. 4. That a new generation might in this time be raised up, which could not be done all of a sudden. And the children being brought up under the tokens of God's displeasure against their fathers, and so bearing their whoredoms, *i. e.* the punishment of their sins, especially their idolatry about the golden calf, which God now remembered against them, might take warning not to tread in the steps of their fathers disobedience. And their wandring so long in the wilderness, would make Canaan at last the more welcome to them. It should seem, that upon occasion of this sentence Moses penned the ninetieth Psalm, which is very apposite to the present state of Israel, and where they are taught to pray, that since this sentence could not be reversed it might be sanctified, and they might learn to apply their hearts unto wisdom. (5.) The mercy that was mixed with this severe sentence. 1. Mercy to Caleb and Joshua; that though they should wander with the rest in the wilderness, yet they, and they only of all that were now above twenty years old, should survive the years of banishment, and live to enter Canaan. Caleb only is spoken of, *ver. 24.* and a particular mark of honour put upon him, both (1.) In the character given of him, he had another spirit, different from the rest of the spies, an after spirit, which furnished him with second thoughts, and he followed the Lord fully, kept close to his duty, and went through with it though deserted and threatned; and, (2.) In the recompence promised to him, *Him will I bring in due time into the land whereunto he went.* Note, 1. It ought to be the great care and endeavour of every one of us to follow the Lord fully. We must in a course of obedience to God's will, and service to his honour, follow him unfeignedly without dividing, uprightly without dissem-

bling, cheerfully without disputing, and constantly without declining; and this is following him fully. 2. Those that would follow God fully must have another spirit, another from the spirit of the world, and another from what their own spirit has been. They must have the spirit of Caleb. 3. They that follow God fully in times of general apostasy, God will own them and honour them by singular preservations in times of general calamity. The heavenly Canaan shall be the everlasting inheritance of those that *follow the Lord fully*. When Caleb is again mentioned, *ver.* 30. Joshua stands with him compassed with the same favours, and crowned with the same honours, having stood with him in the same services. 2. Mercy to the children, even of these rebels. They should have a seed preserved, and Canaan secured to that seed, *ver.* 31. *Your little ones*, now under twenty years old, which you in your unbelief, *said should be a prey, them will I bring in*. They had invidiously charged God with a design to ruin their children, *ver.* 3. But God will let them know that he can put a difference between the guilty and the innocent, and cut them off without touching their children. Thus the promise made to Abraham, though it seemed to fail for a time, was kept from failing for evermore; and though God chastened their transgression with a rod, yet his *loving kindness he would not utterly take away*.

36. And the men which Moses sent to search the land, who returned, and made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up a slander upon the land ; 37. Even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the LORD. 38. But Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, *which were* of the men that went to search the land, lived *still*. 39. And Moses told these sayings unto all the children of Israel : and the people mourned greatly. 40. ¶ And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we *be here*, and will go up unto the place which the LORD hath promised : for we have sinned. 41. And Moses said, Wherefore now do you transgress the commandment of the LORD ? but it shall not prosper. 42. Go not up, for the LORD is not among you ; that ye be not smitten before your enemies. 43. For the Amalekites, and the Canaanites *are* there before you, and ye shall fall by the sword : because ye are turned away from the LORD ; therefore the LORD will not be with you. 44. But they presumed to go up unto the hill-top : nevertheless, the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and Moses, departed not out of the camp. 45. Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, *even* unto Hormah.

Here is, 1. The sudden death of the ten evil spies. While the sentence was in passing upon the people, before it was published, they *died of the plague before the Lord*, ver. 36, 37. Now, 1. God hereby shewed his particular displeasure against them, who *sinned, and made Israel to sin*. (1.) They sinned themselves, in *bringing up a slander upon the land of promise*. Note, Those greatly provoke God who misrepresent religion, cast reproach upon it, and raise prejudices in mens minds against it, or give occasion to those to do so who seek occasion. Those that represent the service of God as mean and despicable, melancholy and uncomfortable, hard and impracticable, needless and unprofitable, bring up an *evil report* upon the good land, *pervert the right ways of the Lord*, and in effect give him the lie. (2.) They *made Israel to sin*. They designedly *made all the congregation murmur against God*. Note, Ring-leaders in sin may expect to fall under particular marks of God's wrath, who will severely reckon for the blood of souls, which is thus spilt. 2. God hereby shewed what he could have done with the whole congregation, and gave an earnest of the execution of the sentence now passed upon them. He that thus cut off one of a tribe, could have cut off their whole tribes suddenly, and would do it gradually. Note, The remarkable deaths of notorious sinners are earnest of the final perdition of ungodly men, 2 Pet. ii. 5, 6. Thus the wrath of God is revealed, that sinners may hear and fear. 2. The special preservation of Caleb and Joshua, ver. 38. *they lived still*. It is likely all the twelve spies stood together, for the eyes of all Israel were now upon them; and therefore it is taken notice of as very remarkable, and which could not but be affecting to the whole congregation, that when the ten evil spies fell down dead of the plague, a malignant infectious distemper, yet these two that stood among them lived, and were well. God hereby confirmed their testimony, and put those to confusion that spake of stoning them. He likewise gave them an assurance of their continued preservation in the wilderness, when thousands should fall on their right hand and on their left, *Psal. xci. 7*. Death never misseth his mark, nor takes any by oversight that were designed for life, though in the midst of those that were to die. 3. The publication of the sentence to all the people, ver. 39. He told them all what the decree was which was gone forth concerning them, and which could not be reversed; that

that they must all die in the wilderness, and Canaan must be reserved for the next generation. It was a very great disappointment, we may well think, to Moses himself, who longed to be in Canaan, as well as to all the people; yet he acquiesced, but they wept and mourned greatly. The assurance Moses had of God's being glorified by this sentence gave him satisfaction, while the conscience of their own guilt, and their having procured it to themselves, gave them the greatest vexation. They wept for nothing, *ver. 1.* and now they have cause given them to weep; so justly are murmurers made mourners. If they had mourned for the sin, when they were faithfully reprov'd for it, *ver. 9.* the sentence had been prevented; but now they mourned for the judgment only, it came too late, and did them no service; they found no place for repentance, though they sought it carefully with tears, *Heb. xii. 17.* Such mourning as this there is in hell, but the tears will not quench the flames, no nor cool the tongue. 4. The foolish fruitless attempt of some of the Israelites to enter Canaan, notwithstanding the sentence. 1. They were now earnest to go forward towards Canaan, *ver. 40.* They were up early, mustered all their force, got together in a body, and begged of Moses to lead them on against the enemy, and now there is no more talk among them of making a captain to return into Egypt. They confess their fault, *we have sinned*; they profess reformation, *Lo, we be here, and will go up.* They now desire the land which they had despised, and put a confidence in the promise which they had distrusted. Thus when God judgeth, he will overcome, and first or last will convince sinners of the evil of all their ungodly deeds, and hard speeches, and force them to recal their own words. But though God was glorified by this recantation of theirs, they were not benefited by it, because it came too late. The decree was gone forth, the consumption was determined, they did not seek the Lord while he might be found, and now he would not be found. O, if men would but be as earnest for heaven while their day of grace lasts, as they will be when it is over, would be as solicitous to provide themselves with oil while the bridegroom tarries, as they will be when the bridegroom cometh, how well were it for them! 2. Moses utterly disallows their motion, and forbids the expedition they were meditating, *ver. 41, 42, 43. Go not up.* (1.) He gives them warning of the sin, it is *transgressing the commandment of the Lord*, who had expressly ordered them when they did move, to move back towards the Red sea. Note, That which has been duty in its season, when it comes to be mis-timed may be turned into sin. It is true, the command he refers to was in the nature of a punishment, but he that has not obeyed the law, is obliged to submit to the penalty, for the Lord is our judge, as well as law-giver. (2.) He gives them warning of the danger, *It shall not prosper*, never expect it. Note, It is folly to promise our selves success in that which we undertake contrary to the mind of God. *The Canaanites are before you* to attack you, and *the Lord is not among you*, to protect you, and fight for you, and therefore look to your selves that ye be not smitten before your enemies. Those that are out of the way of their duty are from under God's protection, and go at their peril. It is dangerous going there where we cannot expect God should go along with us. Nay, he plainly foresees and foretels their defeat, *ye shall fall by the sword* of the Amalekites and Canaanites, who were to have fallen by their sword, *because ye are turned away from the Lord*, from following the conduct of his precept and promise, *therefore the Lord will not be with you.* Note, God will certainly leave those that leave him; and those that are left of him lie exposed to all misery. 3. They venture notwithstanding. Never was people so perverse, and so desperately resolved in every thing to walk contrary to God. God bid them go, and they would not; he forbid them, and they would. Thus is the carnal mind enmity to God: *ver. 44. They presumed to go up unto the hill-top.* Here, (1.) They struggled against the sentence of divine justice, and would press on in defiance of it. (2.) They slighted the tokens of God's presence, for they would go, though they left Moses, and the ark of the covenant behind them. They had distrusted God's strength, and now they presume upon their own without his. 4. The expedition speeds accordingly, *ver. 45.* The enemy had posted themselves upon the top of the hill, to make good that pass against the invaders, and being informed by their scouts of their approach, sallied out upon them, and defeated them, and it is likely many of the Israelites were killed. Now the sentence began to be executed, that their *carcasses should fall in the wilderness.* Note, That affair can never end well that begins with sin. The way to obtain peace with our friends, and success against our enemies, is to make God our friend, and keep our selves in his love. The Jews, like these their ancestors, when they had *rejected Christ's righteousness*, attempted to *establish their own*, and it sped as this here.

C H A P. XV.

This chapter, which is mostly concerning sacrifice and offering, comes in between the story of two rebellions, one, chap. xiv. the other, chap. xvi. to signify that these legal institutions were typical of the gifts which Christ was to receive even for the rebellious, *Pf. lxxviii. 8.* In the foregoing chapter, upon Israel's provocation, God had determined to destroy them, and in token of his wrath, had sentenced them to perish in the wilderness. But upon Moses's in-

tercession he said, *I have pardoned*; and in token of that mercy, in this chapter he repeats and explains some of the laws concerning offerings, to shew that he was reconciled to them, notwithstanding the severe dispensation they were under, and would not unchurch them. Here is, 1. The law concerning the meat-offerings and drink-offerings, *ver. 1—12.* both for Israelites and for strangers, *ver. 13—16.* and a law concerning the heave-offerings of the first of their dough, *ver. 17—21.* 2. The law concerning sacrifices for sins of ignorance, *ver. 22—29.* 3. The punishment of presumptuous sins, *ver. 30, 31.* and an instance given in the Sabbath-breaker, *ver. 32—36.* 4. A law concerning fringe, for memorandums upon the borders of their garments, *ver. 37—41.*

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land of your habitations, which I give unto you, 3. And will make an offering by fire unto the LORD, a burnt-offering, or a sacrifice in performing a vow, or in a free-will offering, or in your solemn feasts, to make a sweet savour unto the LORD, of the herd, or of the flock: 4. Then shall he that offereth his offering unto the LORD, bring a meat-offering of a tenth-deal of flour, mingled with the fourth part of an hin of oil. 5. And the fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink-offering shalt thou prepare, with the burnt-offering, or sacrifice, for one lamb. 6. Or for a ram, thou shalt prepare for a meat-offering, two tenth-deals of flour mingled with the third part of an hin of oil. 7. And for a drink-offering, thou shalt offer the third part of an hin of wine, for a sweet savour unto the LORD. 8. And when thou preparest a bullock for a burnt-offering, or for a sacrifice in performing a vow, or peace-offerings unto the LORD: 9. Then shall he bring with a bullock a meat-offering of three tenth-deals of flour mingled with half an hin of oil. 10. And thou shalt bring for a drink-offering half an hin of wine, for an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the LORD. 11. Thus shall it be done for one bullock, or for one ram, or for a lamb, or a kid. 12. According to the number that ye shall prepare, so shall ye do to every one, according to their number. 13. All that are born of the country, shall do these things after this manner, in offering an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the LORD. 14. And if a stranger sojourn with you, or whosoever be among you in your generations, and will offer an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the LORD: as ye do, so he shall do. 15. One ordinance shall be both for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger that sojourneth with you, an ordinance for ever in your generations: as ye are, so shall the stranger be before the LORD. 16. One law, and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you. 17. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 18. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land whither I bring you, 19. Then it shall be, that when ye eat of the bread of the land, ye shall offer up an heave-offering unto the LORD. 20. Ye shall offer up a cake of the first of your dough, for an heave-offering: as ye do the heave-offering of the threshing-floor, so shall ye heave it. 21. Of the first of your dough ye shall give unto the LORD, an heave-offering in your generations.

Here is, 1. Full instructions given concerning the meat-offerings and drink-offerings, which were appendages to all the sacrifices of animals. The beginning of this law is very encouraging, *When ye come into the land of your habitation which I give unto you*, then you shall do so and so, *ver. 2.* This was a plain intimation, not only that God was reconciled to them, notwithstanding the sentence he had passed upon them, but that he would secure the promised land to their seed, notwithstanding their aptness to rebel against him. They might think some time or other they should be guilty of a misdemeanor, that would be fatal to them, and would exclude them for ever, as the last had done for one generation; but this intimates an assurance, that they should be kept from provoking God to such a degree as would amount to a forfeiture; for this statute takes it for granted that there were some of them that should in due time come into Canaan. The meat-offerings were of two sorts; some were offered alone by themselves, and we have the law concerning those, *Lev. ii. 1.* Others were added to the burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, and constantly attended them, and about those direction is here given. It was requisite, since the sacrifices of acknowledgment, (instanced in *ver. 3.*) were intended as the food of God's table, there should be a constant provision of bread, oil, and wine, whatever the flesh-meat was. The caterers or purveyors for Solomon's temple, provided

vided *fine flour*, 1 Kings iv. 22. And it was fit God should keep a good house, and that his table should be furnished with bread as well as flesh, and his cup should run over. In my father's house there is bread enough.

Now the intent of this law is to direct what proportion the meat-offering and drink-offering should bear to the several sacrifices to which they were annexed. If the sacrifice was a lamb, or a kid, then the meat-offering must be a tenth deal of flour, that is, an omer, which contained about five pints, this must be mingled with oil, the fourth part of a hin, and a hin contained about five quarts; and the drink-offering must be the same quantity of wine, about a quart and a half pint, *ver.* 3, 4, 5. If it was a ram, the meat-offering was doubled, two tenth deals of flour, about five quarts, and a third part of a hin of oil, (which was to them as butter is to us) mingled with it; and the same quantity of wine for a drink-offering, *ver.* 6, 7. If the sacrifice was a bullock, the meat-offering was to be trebled, three omers, with five pints of oil, and the same quantity of wine for a drink-offering, *ver.* 8, 9, 10. And thus for each sacrifice, whether offered by a particular person, or at the common charge. Note, Our religious services should be governed, as by other rules, so by the rule of proportion. 2. Natives and strangers are here set upon a level, in this as in other matters, *ver.* 13—16. *One law shall be for you and for the stranger* that is profelyted to the Jewish religion. Now, 1. This was an invitation to the Gentiles to become profelytes, and to embrace the faith and worship of the true God. In civil things there was a difference between strangers and true born Israelites, but not in the things of God; *as ye are, so shall the stranger be before the Lord*, for with him there is no respect of persons. See *Isa.* lvi. 3. 2. This was an obligation upon the Jews to be kind to strangers, and not to oppress them, because they saw them owned and accepted of God. Communion in religion is a great engagement to mutual affection, and should stay all enmities. 3. It was a mortification to the pride of the Jews, who were apt to be puffed up with their birthright privileges, We are Abraham's seed; God lets them know, that the sons of the stranger were as welcome to him as the sons of Jacob; no man's birth or parentage shall turn either to his advantage or his prejudice, in his acceptance with God. This likewise intimated, that as believing strangers should be accounted Israelites, so unbelieving Israelites should be accounted strangers. 4. It was a happy presage of the calling of the Gentiles, and the admission of them into the church. If the law made so little difference between Jew and Gentile, much less would the gospel make, which broke down the partition wall, and reconciled both to God in one sacrifice, without the observance of the legal ceremonies. 3. A law for the offering the first of their dough unto the Lord. This, as the former, goes upon the comfortable supposition of their being *come into the promised land*, *ver.* 18. Now they lived upon manna, they needed not such express acknowledgment of God's title to their daily bread, and their dependence upon him for it, the thing spoke it self; but in Canaan, where they should eat the fruit of their own industry, God required that he should be owned as their landlord, and their great benefactor. They must not only offer him the first-fruits and tenths of the corn in their fields, those had been already reserved, but when they had it in their houses, in their kneading troughs, when it was almost ready to be set upon their tables, God must have a further tribute of acknowledgment, part of their dough (the Jews say a fortieth part at least of the whole lump) must be heaved or offered up to God, *ver.* 20, 21. and the priest must have it for the use of his family. Thus they must own their dependence upon God for their daily bread, even when they had it in the house with them; they must then wait on God for the comfortable use of it, for we read of that which was brought home, and yet God did blow upon it, and it came to little, *Hag.* i. 9. Christ hath taught us to pray, not give us this year our yearly harvest, but *give us this day our daily bread*. God by this law said to the people, as the prophet long after said to the widow of Sarepta, 1 Kings xvii. 13. *Only make me thereof a little cake first*. This offering was expressly kept up by the laws of Ezekiel's visionary temple, and it is a commandment with promise of family mercies, *Ezek.* xlv. 30. *Ye shall give unto the priest the first of your dough, that he may cause the blessing to rest in thine house*; for when God has had his dues out of our estates, we may expect the comfort of what falls to our share.

22. ¶ And if ye have erred, and not observed all these commandments, which the LORD hath spoken unto Moses, 23. *Even* all that the LORD hath commanded you by the hand of Moses, from the day that the LORD commanded Moses, and henceforward among your generations: 24. Then it shall be, if *ought* be committed by ignorance, without the knowledge of the congregation; that all the congregation shall offer one young bullock for a burnt-offering, for a sweet savour unto the LORD, with his meat-offering, and his drink-offering, according to the manner, and one kid of the goats for a sin-offering. 25. And the priest shall make an atonement for all the congregation of the children of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them, for it is ignorance: and they shall

bring their offering, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD, and their sin-offering before the LORD, for their ignorance. 26. And it shall be forgiven all the congregation of the children of Israel, and the stranger that sojourneth among them; seeing all the people *were* in ignorance. 27. ¶ And if any soul sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a she-goat of the first year for a sin-offering. 28. And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the LORD, to make an atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him. 29. You shall have one law for him that sinneth through ignorance, *both* for him that is born amongst the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them.

We have here the laws concerning sacrifices for sins of ignorance; the Jews understand it of idolatry, or false worship, through the error of their teachers; the case here supposed is, that *ye have not observed all these commandments*, *ver.* 22, 23. If they had failed in the offerings of their acknowledgment, and had not brought them according to the law, then they must bring an offering of atonement; yea, though the omission had been through forgetfulness, or mistake. If they failed in one part of the ceremony, they must make it up by the observance of another part, which was in the nature of a remedial law.

1. The case is put of a national sin, committed through ignorance, and become customary through a vulgar error, *ver.* 24. the congregation, *i. e.* the body of the people, for so it is explained, *ver.* 25. *All the congregation of the children of Israel*. The ceremonial observances were so numerous, and so various, that it might easily be supposed, some of them by degrees would be forgotten and disused, as particularly that immediately before concerning the heave-offering of their dough: now if in process of time, upon consulting the law, there appears to have been a general neglect of that or any other appointment, then a sacrifice must be offered for the whole congregation, and the oversight shall be forgiven, *ver.* 25, 26. and not punished, as it deserved, with some national judgment. The offering of the sacrifice according to the manner, or ordinance, plainly refers to a former statute, which this is the repetition of; and the same bullock which is there called a sin-offering, *Lev.* iv. 13, 21. is here called a burnt-offering, *ver.* 24. because it was wholly burnt, though not upon the altar, yet without the camp. And here is the addition of a *kid of the goats for a sin-offering*. According to this law we find that Hezekiah made atonement for the errors of his father's reign, by *seven bullocks, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven he-goats*, which he offered as a *sin-offering for the kingdom, and for the sanctuary, and for Judah*, 2 Chron. xxix. 21. and *for all Israel*, *ver.* 24. And we find the like done after the return out of captivity, *Ezra* viii. 35. 2. It is likewise supposed to be the case of a particular person. *If any soul sin through ignorance*, *ver.* 27. neglecting any part of his duty, he must bring his offering, as was appointed, *Lev.* iv. 27, &c. Thus atonement shall be made *for the soul that sins ignorantly, when he sins by ignorance*, *ver.* 28.

Observe, 1. Sins committed ignorantly need to have atonement made for them; for though ignorance will excuse, it will not justify those that might have known their Lord's will, and did not. David prays to be cleansed from his secret faults, *i. e.* those sins which he himself was not aware of, the errors he did not understand, *Psal.* xix. 12. 2. Sins committed ignorantly shall be forgiven, through Christ the great sacrifice, who, when he offered up himself once for all upon the cross, seemed to explain the intention of his offering, in that prayer, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*. And Paul seems to allude to this law concerning sins of ignorance, 1 Tim. i. 13. *I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly, and in unbelief*. And it looked favourably upon the Gentiles, that this law of atoning for sins of ignorance is expressly made to extend to those who were strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, *ver.* 29. but supposed to be *profelytes of righteousness*. Thus the blessing of Abraham comes upon the Gentiles.

30. ¶ But the soul that doeth *ought* presumptuously (*whether he be* born in the land, or a stranger) the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. 31. Because he hath despised the word of the LORD, and hath broken his commandment; that soul shall utterly be cut off: his iniquity *shall* be upon him. 32. ¶ And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath-day. 33. And they that found him gathering sticks, brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. 34. And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him. 35. And the LORD said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. 36. And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and

and stoned him with stones, and he died ; as the LORD commanded Moses.

Here is, 1. The general doom passed upon presumptuous sinners. 1. These are to be reckoned presumptuous sinners that sin with a high hand, as the original phrase is, *ver. 30. i. e. that avowedly confront God's authority, and set up their own lusts in competition with it ; that sin for sinning sake, in contradiction to the precept of the law, and in defiance of the penalty ; that fight against God, and dare him to do his worst ; see Job xv. 25. It is not only to sin against knowledge, but to sin designedly against God's will and glory.* 2. Sins thus committed are exceeding sinful. He that thus breaks the commandment, (1.) *He reproacheth the Lord, ver. 30. he saith the worst he can of him, and most unjustly. The language of presumptuous sin is, that eternal truth is not fit to be believed, the Lord of all not fit to be obeyed, and almighty power not fit to be either feared or trusted. It imputes folly to infinite wisdom, and iniquity to the righteous judge of heaven and earth ; such is the malignity of wilful sin.* (2.) *He despiseth the word of the Lord, ver. 31. There are those who in many instances come short of fulfilling the word, and yet have a great value for it, and count the law honourable ; but presumptuous sinners despise it, thinking themselves too great and too good, and too wise to be ruled by it. What is the Almighty that we should serve him ? Whatever the sin it self is, it is contumacy that incurs the Anathema. It is rebellion added to the sin, that is as witchcraft, and stubbornness as idolatry.* 3. The sentence passed on such is dreadful. There remains no sacrifice for those sins, the law provided none, *that soul shall be cut off from among his people, ver. 30. utterly cut off, ver. 31. and that God may be for ever justified, and the sinner for ever confounded, his iniquity shall be upon him, and there needs no more to sink him to the lowest hell. Thus the Jewish doctors understand it, that the iniquity shall cleave to the soul, after it is cut off, and that man shall give account of his sin at the great day of judgment.* Perhaps, the kind of the offence might be such as did not expose the offender to the censure of the civil magistrate, but if it were done presumptuously, God himself would take the punishment of it into his own hands, and into them it is a fearful thing to fall. In the New Testament we find the like sentence of exclusion from all benefit, by the great sacrifice, passed upon the blasphemy against the holy Ghost, and a total apostasy from christianity. See *Matt. xii. 32. and Heb. x. 26. which refers to this here.* 2. A particular instance of presumption in the sin of sabbath-breaking. 1. The offence was *gathering sticks on the sabbath-day, ver. 32. which it is likely were designed to make a fire of, whereas they were commanded to bake and seeth what they had occasion for the day before, Exod. xvi. 23. This seemed but a small offence, but it was a violation of the law of the sabbath, and so was an implicit contempt of the Creator, to whose honour the sabbath was dedicated, and an incursion upon the whole law, which the sabbath was intended as a hedge about. And it appears by the context to have been done presumptuously, and in affront both to the law, and to the law-maker.* 2. The offender was secured, *ver. 33, 34. They that found him gathering sticks, in their zeal for the honour of the sabbath, brought him to Moses and Aaron, and to all the congregation ; which intimates, that it being the sabbath-day, the congregation was at that time gathered to Moses and Aaron, to receive instruction from them, and to join with them in religious worship. It seems even common Israelites, though there was much amiss among them, yet would not contentedly see the sabbath profaned, which was a good sign that they had not quite forsaken God, nor were utterly forsaken of him.* 3. God was consulted, *because it was not declared what should be done to him. The law had already made the profanation of the sabbath a capital crime, Exod. xxxi. 14. chap. xxxv. 2. but they were in doubt, either concerning the offence, whether this that he had done should be deemed a profanation of the sabbath or no ; or concerning the punishment, what death he should die. God was the judge, and before him they brought this cause.* 4. Sentence was passed ; the prisoner was adjudged a sabbath-breaker according to the intent of that law, and as such he must be put to death ; and to shew how great the crime was, and how displeasing to God, and that others might hear and fear, and not do in like manner presumptuously, that death is appointed him which was looked upon as most terrible, he must be *stoned with stones, ver. 35. Note, God is jealous for the honour of his sabbaths, and will not hold them guiltless, whatever men do, that profane them.* 5. Execution was done pursuant to the sentence, *ver. 36. He was stoned to death by the congregation. As many as could were employed in the execution, that they at least might be afraid of breaking the sabbath, who had thrown a stone at this sabbath-breaker. This intimates, that the open profanation of the sabbath is a sin which ought to be punished and restrained by the civil magistrate, who as far as overt acts go, is keeper of both tables. See *Neh. xiii. 17. One would think there could be no great harm in gathering a few sticks, on what day soever it was, but God intended the exemplary punishment of him that did so, for a standing warning to us all, to make conscience of keeping holy the sabbath.**

37. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
38. Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that

they make them fringes in the borders of their garments, throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue. 39. And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them : and that ye seek not after your own heart, and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring : 40. That ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God. 41. I am the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God : I am the LORD your God.

Provision had been just now made by the law for the pardon of sins of ignorance and infirmity, now here is an expedient provided for the preventing of such sins. They are ordered to make fringes upon the borders of their garments, which were to be memorandums to them of their duty, that they might not sin through forgetfulness.

1. The sign appointed is a fringe of silk, or thread, or worsted, or the garment it self ravelled at the bottom, and a blue ribband bound on the top of it to keep it tight, *ver. 38. The Jews being a peculiar people, they were thus distinguished from their neighbours in their dress, as well as in their diet, and taught by such little instances of singularity, not to be conformed to the way of the heathen in greater things. Thus likewise they proclaimed themselves Jews wherever they were, as those that were not ashamed of God and his law. Our Saviour being made under the law wore these fringes ; hence we read of the hem or border of his garment, *Matt. ix. 20. These borders the Pharisees enlarged, that they might be thought more holy and devout than other people. Yet the phylacteries were different things, those were their own invention, the fringes were a divine institution. The Jews at this day wear them, saying, when they put them on, Blessed be he who has sanctified us unto himself, and commanded us to wear fringes.* 2. The intention of it, was to mind them that they were a peculiar people. They were not appointed for the trimming and adorning of their clothes, but to *stir up their pure minds by way of remembrance, 2 Pet. iii. 1. That they might look upon the fringe, and remember the commandments. Many look upon their ornaments to feed their pride, but they must look upon these ornaments to awaken their consciences to a sense of their duty, that their religion might constantly beset them, and they might carry it about with them, as they did their clothes, wherever they went. If they were tempted to sin, the fringe would be a monitor to them, not to break God's commandments : if a duty were forgotten to be done in its season, the fringe would mind them of it. This institution, though it be not an imposition upon us, is an instruction to us, always to remember the commandments of the Lord our God, that we may do them. To treasure them up in our memories, and to apply them to particular cases as there is occasion to use them. It was intended particularly to be a preservation from idolatry, that ye seek not after your own heart, and your own eyes, in your religious worship. Yet it may extend also to the whole conversation, for nothing is more contrary to God's honour, and our own true interest, than to walk in the way of our heart, and in the sight of our eyes ; for the imagination of the heart is evil, and so is the lust of the eyes.**

After the repetition of some ceremonial appointments, the chapter closeth with the repetition of that great and fundamental law of religion, *Be holy unto your God ;* purged from sin, and sincerely devoted to his service ; and that great reason for all the commandments, is again and again inculcated, *I am the Lord your God. Did we more firmly believe, and more frequently and seriously consider, that God is the Lord, and our God and redeemer, we should see our selves bound in duty, interest, and gratitude, to keep all his commandments.*

C H A P. XVI.

The date of the history contained in this chapter is altogether uncertain. Probably, these mutinies happened after their remove back again from Kadesh-barnea, when they were fixed (if I may so speak) for their wandering in the wilderness, and began to look upon that as their settlement. Presently after new laws given, follows the story of a new rebellion, as if sin took occasion from the commandment to become more exceeding sinful. Here is, 1. A daring and dangerous rebellion raised against Moses and Aaron, by Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, *ver. 1—15. 1. Korah and his accomplices contend for the priesthood against Aaron, ver. 3. and Moses reasons with them, and appeals to God for a decision of the controversy, ver. 4—11. 2. Dathan and Abiram quarrel with Moses, and refuse to obey his summons, which greatly grieves him, ver. 12—15. 2. A solemn appearance of the pretenders to the priesthood before God, according to order, and a publick appearance of the glory of the Lord, which had consumed the whole congregation, if Moses and Aaron had not interceded, ver. 16—22. 4. The deciding of the controversy, and the crushing of rebellion, by the cutting off of the rebels. 1. Those in their tents were buried alive, ver. 23—34. 2. Those at the door of the tabernacle were consumed by fire, ver. 35. and their censers*

preserved for a memorial, ver. 37—40. 4. A new insurrection of the people, ver. 41—43. 1. God stayed the insurrection by a plague, ver. 45. 2. Aaron stayed the plague by offering incense, ver. 46—50. The manner and method of recording this story, plainly speaks the ferment very high.

NOW Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi; and Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men. 2. And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel; two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown. 3. And they gathered themselves together against Moses, and against Aaron, and said unto them, *Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift you up your selves above the congregation of the LORD?* 4. And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face: 5. And he spake unto Korah, and unto all his company, saying, *Even to morrow the LORD will shew who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him: even him whom he hath chosen, will he cause to come near unto him.* 6. This do; Take you censers, Korah, and all his company; 7. And put fire therein, and put incense in them before the LORD to morrow: and it shall be *that* the man whom the LORD doth choose, he *shall be* holy: *ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi.* 8. And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi: 9. *Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself, to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation, to minister unto them:* 10. And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also? 11. For which cause *both* thou, and all thy company *are* gathered together against the LORD: and what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him?

Here is, 1. An account of the rebels, who and what they were, not, as formerly, the mixed multitude, and the dregs of the people, who are therefore never named, but men of distinction and quality, that made a figure. Korah was the ring-leader, he formed and headed the faction, therefore it is called the gainfaying of Korah, *Jude 11.* He was cousin-german to Moses, they were brothers children, yet the nearness of the relation could not restrain him from being insolent and rude to Moses. Think it not strange if a man's foes be *they of his own house.* With him joined Dathan and Abiram, chief men of the tribe of Reuben, the eldest son of Jacob. Probably, Korah was disgusted both at the preferment of Aaron to the priesthood, and the constituting of Elizaphan to be head of the Kohathites, *Numb. iii. 30.* and perhaps the Reubenites were angry that the tribe of Judah had the first post of honour in the camp. On is mentioned, *ver. 1.* as one of the heads of the faction, but never after in the whole story; either because as some think he repented and left them, or, because he did not make himself so remarkable as Dathan and Abiram did. The Kohathites encamped on the same side of the tabernacle that the Reubenites did, which perhaps gave Korah an opportunity of drawing them in; whence the Jews say, *Wo to the wicked man, and wo to his neighbour, who is in danger of being infected by him.* And these being themselves topping men, they seduced into the conspiracy *two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, ver. 2.* probably, they were first-born, or at least heads of families, who, before the elevation of Aaron, had themselves ministered in holy things. Note, The pride, ambition and emulation of great men, has always been the occasion of a great deal of mischief both in churches and states. God by his grace make great men humble, and so give peace in our time, O Lord. Famous men, and men of renown, as these here are described to be, were the great sinners of the old world, *Gen. vi. 4.* The fame and renown they had did not content them, they were high, but would be higher, and thus the famous men became infamous. 2. The rebels remonstrance, *ver. 3.* that which they quarrel with, is the settlement of the priesthood upon Aaron and his family, which they think an honour too great for Moses to give, and Aaron to accept, and so they are both charged with a usurpation. *Ye take too much upon you; or, Let it suffice you to be upon a level with your neighbours, who are all holy, all as good as you, and therefore ought to be as great.* Or, Let it suffice you to have domineered thus long, and now think of resigning your places to those that have as good a title to them, and are as well able to manage them. 1. They proudly boast of the holiness of the congregation, and the presence of God in it. They are *holy, every one of them,* and as fit to be employed in offering sacrifice as Aaron is, and as masters of families formerly were; and *the Lord is among them,* to direct and own them. Small reason they had to

brag of the peoples purity, or of God's favour, since the people had been so frequently and so lately polluted with sin, and were now under the marks of God's displeasure, which should have made them thankful for priests to mediate between them and God, but instead of that they envy them. 2. They unjustly charge Moses and Aaron with taking the honour they had to themselves, whereas it was evident beyond contradiction that they were called of God to it, *Heb. v. 4.* So that either they would have no priests at all, nor any government, none to preside either in civil or sacred things, none over the congregation, none above it; or they would not acquiesce in that constitution of the government which God had appointed. See here, (1.) What spirit levellers are of, and those that despise dominions, and resist the powers that God has set over them; they are proud, envious, ambitious, turbulent, wicked and unreasonable men. (2.) What usage even the best and most useful men may expect, even from those they have been serviceable to. If they be represented as usurpers that have the best titles, and they as tyrants that govern best, let them know that Moses and Aaron were thus abused. 3. Moses's resentment of this remonstrance, when it was published against him. How did he take it? 1. He *fell on his face, ver. 4.* as before, *chap. xiv. 5.* Thus he shewed how willing he would have been to yield to them, and how gladly he would have resigned his government, if it would have consisted with his duty to God, and his fidelity to the trust reposed in him. Thus also he applied himself to God by prayer, for direction what to say and do upon this sad occasion. He would not speak to them till he had thus humbled and composed his own spirit, (which could not but begin to be heated) and had received instructions from God. The *heart of the wise* in such a case *studies to answer,* and asks counsel at God's mouth. 2. He agrees to refer the case to God, and leave it to him to decide it, as one well assured of the goodness of his title, and yet well content to resign, if God saw fit to gratify this discontented people with another nomination. An honest cause fears not a trial, fears not a second trial, fears not a speedy trial; even to morrow let it be brought on, *ver. 5, 6, 7.* Let Korah and his partisans bring their censers, and offer incense before the Lord, and if he testify his acceptance of them, well and good; Moses is now as willing all the Lord's people should be priests, if God so please, as before that they should all be prophets, *chap. xi. 29.* But if God, upon an appeal to him, determine (as no doubt he would) for Aaron, they would find it highly dangerous to make the experiment: and therefore he puts it off till to morrow, to try whether when they had slept upon it they would desist, and let fall their pretensions. 3. He argues the case fairly with them, to still the mutiny with fair reasoning, if possible, before the appeal came to God's tribunal, for then he knew it would end in confusion of the complainants.

1. He calls them *the sons of Levi, ver. 7.* and again, *ver. 8.* They were of his own tribe, nay, they were God's tribe, it was therefore the worse in them thus to mutiny, both against God, and against him. It was not long since the sons of Levi had bravely appeared on God's side in the matter of the golden calf, and got immortal honour by it; and shall they that were then the only innocents, now be the leading criminals, and lose all the honour they had won? Could there be such chaff in God's floor? Levites and yet rebels? 2. He retorts their charge upon themselves; they had unjustly charged Moses and Aaron with taking too much upon them, though they had no more but what God put upon them; nay, saith Moses, *You take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi.* Note, They that take upon them to control and contradict God's appointment, take too much upon them. It is enough for us to submit, it is too much to prescribe. 3. He shews them the privilege they had as Levites, which was sufficient for them, they needed not to aspire to the honour of the priesthood, *ver. 9, 10.* He minds them, (1.) How great the honour was to which they were preferred, as Levites. 1. They were *separated from the congregation of Israel,* distinguished from them, dignified above them; instead of complaining that Aaron's family was advanced above theirs, they ought to be thankful that their tribe was advanced above the rest of the tribes, though they had been in all respects upon the level with them. Note, It will help to keep us from envying those that are above us, duly to consider how many there are above whom we are placed. Instead of fretting that any are preferred before us in honour, power, estate or interest, in gifts, graces, or usefulness, we have reason to bless God, if we, who are less than the least, are not put hindmost. Many perhaps who deserve better, are not preferred so well. 2. They were separated to very great and valuable honours, (1.) To *draw near to God,* nearer than common Israelites, though they also were a people unto him; the nearer any are to God, the greater is their honour. (2.) To *do the service of the tabernacle.* It is honour enough to bear the vessels of the sanctuary, and to be employed in any part of the service of the tabernacle. God's service is not only perfect freedom, but high preferment. (3.) To *stand before the congregation to minister unto them.* Note, Those are truly great that serve the publick, and it is the honour of God's ministers to be the church's ministers; nay, which adds to the dignity put upon them, 3. It was the God of Israel himself that separated them. It was his act and deed to put them in their place, and therefore they ought not to be discontented with that; and he it

was likewise that put Aaron into his place, and therefore they ought not to envy that. 4. He convicts them of the sin of undervaluing these privileges, *Seemeth it a small thing unto you?* *q. d.* It ill becomes you of all men to grudge Aaron the priesthood, when at the same time that he was advanced to that honour, you were designed for another honour dependent upon it, and shine with rays borrowed from him. Note, 1. The privilege of drawing near to the God of Israel, is not a small thing in it self, and therefore must not seem small to us. To those who neglect opportunities of drawing near to God, who are careless and formal in it, to whom it is a task and not a pleasure, we may properly put this question; *Seemeth it a small thing to you, that God has made you a people near unto him?* 2. Those who aspire after and usurp the honours forbidden them, put a great contempt upon the honours allowed them. We have each of us as good a share of reputation as God sees fit for us, and sees us fit for, and much better than we deserve, and we ought to rest satisfied with it, and not as these here, *exercise our selves in things too high for us; Seek ye the priesthood also?* They would not own that they sought it, but Moses saw that in their eye; the law had provided very well for those that served at the altar, and therefore they would put in for the office. 5. He interprets their mutiny to be a rebellion against God, *ver. 11.* while they pretended to assert the holiness and liberty of the Israel of God, they really took up arms against the God of Israel, *Ye are gathered together against the Lord.* Note, Those that strive against God's ordinances and providences, whatever they pretend, and whether they are aware of it or no, do indeed strive with their maker. Those resist the prince, who resist those that are commissioned by him: for alas, faith Moses, *What is Aaron that ye murmur against him?* If murmurers and complainers would consider, that the instruments they quarrel with, are but instruments whom God employs, and that they are but what he makes them, and neither more nor less, better nor worse, they would not be so bold and free in their censures and reproaches as they are. They that found the priesthood as it was settled a blessing, must give all the praise to God; but if any thought it a burthen, they must not therefore quarrel with Aaron, who is but what he is made, and doth as he is bidden. Thus he interested God in the cause, and so might be sure of speeding well in his appeal.

12. ¶ And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab: which said, We will not come up. 13. *Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and hony, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thy self altogether a prince over us?* 14. Moreover, thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and hony, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards: wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? we will not come up. 15. And Moses was very wroth, and said unto the LORD, Respect not thou their offering: I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them. 16. And Moses said unto Korah, Be thou and all thy company before the LORD, thou, and they, and Aaron to morrow: 17. And take every man his censur, and put incense in them, and bring ye before the LORD every man his censur, two hundred and fifty censers; thou also and Aaron each of you his censur. 18. And they took every man his censur, and put fire in them, and laid incense thereon, and stood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation with Moses and Aaron. 19. And Korah gathered all the congregation against them, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the congregation. 20. And the LORD spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron, saying, 21. Separate your selves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment. 22. And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?

Here is, 1. The insolence of Dathan and Abiram and their treasonable remonstrance. Moses had heard what Korah had to say, and had answered it; now he summons Dathan and Abiram to bring in their complaints, *ver. 12.* but they would not obey his summons; either because they could not for shame say that to his face, which they were resolved to say, and then it is an instance of some remains of modesty in them; or rather, because they would not so far own his authority, and then it is an instance of the highest degree of impudence. They spoke the language of Pharaoh himself, who set Moses at defiance, but they forgot how dear he paid for it. Had not their heads been wretchedly heated, and their hearts hardened, they might have considered, that if they regarded not these messengers, Moses could soon in God's name send messengers of death for them. But thus the God of this world blinds the minds of them that believe not. But by the same messengers they send their articles of impeachment against Moses.

And the charge runs very high. 1. They charge him with having done them a great deal of wrong in bringing them out of Egypt, invidiously calling that a land flowing with milk and hony, *ver. 13.* Onions, and garlicks, and fish, they had indeed plenty of in Egypt, but it never pretended to milk and hony; only they would thus banter the promise of Canaan. Ungrateful wretches, to represent that as an injury to them, which was really the greatest favour that ever was bestowed upon any people! 2. They charge him with a design upon their lives, that he intended to kill them in this wilderness, though they were so well provided for. And if they were sentenced to die in the wilderness, they must thank themselves. Moses would have healed them, and they would not be healed. 3. They charge him with a design upon their liberties, that he meant to enslave them, by making himself a prince over them. A prince over them! Was he not a tender father to them, nay, their humble servant for the Lord's sake? Had they not their properties secured, their order preserved, justice impartially administered? Did they not live in ease and honour? and yet they complain as if Moses's yoke were heavier than Pharaoh's. And did Moses make himself a prince? far from it. How gladly would he have declined the office at first? How gladly would he have resigned it many a time since? And yet is thus put under the blackest characters of a tyrant, and a usurper. 4. They charge him with cheating them, raising their expectations of a good land, and then defeating them, *ver. 14.* *Thou hast not brought us, as thou promisedst us, into a land that floweth with milk and hony;* and pray whose fault was that? He had brought them to the borders of it, and was just ready under God to put them in possession of it, but they thrust it away from them, and shut the door against themselves; so that it was purely their own fault that they were not now in Canaan, and yet Moses must bear the blame. Thus when the foolishness of man perverteth his way, his heart fretteth against the Lord, *Prov. xix. 3.* 5. They charge him in the general with unfair dealing, that put out the eyes of these men, and then meant to lead them blindfold as he pleased. The design of all he did for them was to open their eyes, and yet they insinuate, that he intended to put out their eyes, that they might not see themselves imposed upon. Note, The wisest and best cannot please every body, nor gain the good word of all. Those often fall under the highest censures, who have merited the highest applause. Many a good work Moses had shewed them from the Father, and for which of these do they reproach him? 2. Moses's just resentment of their insolence, *ver. 15.* Moses, though the meekest man, yet, finding God reproached in him, was very wroth; he could not bear to see a people ruining themselves, for whose salvation he had done so much. In this discomposure, (1.) He appeals to God concerning his own integrity; whereas they basely reflected upon him as ambitious, covetous, and oppressive, in making himself a prince over them; God was his witness, (1.) That he never got any thing by them; *I have not taken one ass from them,* not only not by way of bribery and extortion, but not by way of recompence or gratuity for all the good offices he had done them, he never took the pay of a general, or salary of a judge, much less the tribute of a prince. He got more in his estate when he kept Jethro's flock, than since he came to be king in Jeshurun. (2.) That they never lost any thing by him, *neither have I hurt any one of them,* no not the least, no not the worst, no not those that had been most peevish and provoking to him: he never abused his power to the support of wrong. Note, Those that have never blemished themselves, need not fear being blemished: when men condemn us we may be easy, if our own hearts condemn us not. (2.) He begs of God to plead his cause, and clear him, by shewing his displeasure at the incense which Korah and his company were to offer, with whom Dathan and Abiram were in confederacy. Lord, faith he, *Respect not thou their offering.* Wherein he seems to refer to the history of Cain, lately written by his own hand, of whom it is said, that to him and his offering God had not respect, *Gen. iv. 4.* These that followed the gainsaying of Korah, walked in the way of Cain, (they are put together *Jude 11.*) and therefore he prays they might be frowned upon as Cain was, and put to the same confusion. 3. Issue joined between Moses and his accusers. 1. Moses challenges them to appear with Aaron, next morning, at the time of offering up the morning incense, and refer themselves to God's judgment, *ver. 16, 17.* Since he could not convince them by his calm and affectionate reasoning, he is ready to enter into bonds, to stand God's award, not doubting but that God would appear to decide the controversy. This reference he had agreed to before, *ver. 6, 7.* and here adds only one clause, which speaks his great condescension to the plaintiffs, that Aaron, against whose advancement they excepted, though now advanced by the divine institution to the honour of burning incense within the tabernacle, yet upon this trial, he should put himself into the place of a probationer, and stand upon the level with Korah, at the door of the tabernacle; nay, and Moses would himself stand with them, so that the complainant shall have all the fair dealing he can desire; and thus every mouth shall be stopped. 2. Korah accepts the challenge, and makes his appearance with Moses and Aaron at the door of the tabernacle, to make good his pretensions, *ver. 18, 19.* If he had not a very great stock of impudence, he could not have carried on the matter thus far. Had not he lately seen Nadab and Abihu,

Abihu, the consecrated priests, struck dead, for daring to offer incense with unhallowed fire, and could he and his accomplices expect to fare any better, in offering incense with unhallowed hands? Yet to confront Moses and Aaron in the height of his pride, he thus bids defiance to heaven, pretends to demand the divine acceptance without a divine warrant, thus wretchedly is the heart hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. They took every man his censer. Perhaps these were some of the censers which these heads of families had made use of at their family altars, before this part of religious service was confined to the priesthood, and the altar in the tabernacle; and they would bring them into use and reputation again, or, they might be common chafing-dishes, which were for their ordinary use. Now to attend the solemn trial, and to be witness of the issue, one would have thought Moses should have gathered the congregation against the rebels, but it seems Korah gathered them against Moses, ver. 19. which intimates that a great part of the congregation sided with Korah, were at his beck, and wished him success: And that Korah's hopes were very high of carrying the point against Aaron; for had he suspected the goodness of his cause, he would not have coveted to make the trial thus publick; but little did he think that he was now calling the congregation together to be the witnesses of his own confusion: Note, Proud and ambitious men, while they are projecting their own advancement, oft prove to have been preparing for their own more shameful fall. 4. The judgment set, and the judge taking the tribunal, and threatening to give sentence against the whole congregation. (1.) The glory of the Lord appeared, ver. 19. The same glory that appeared to instal Aaron in his office at first, Lev. ix. 23. now appeared to confirm him in it, and to confound those that oppose him, and set up themselves in competition with him. The Shechinah, or divine Majesty, the glory of the eternal word, which ordinarily dwelt between the cherubims, within the veil, now was publickly seen over the door of the tabernacle, to the terror of the whole congregation, for though they saw no manner of similitude, yet, probably, the appearances of the light and fire were such as plainly shewed God to be angry with them; as when he appeared, Num. xiv. 10. Nothing is more terrible to those who are conscious of guilt, than the appearances of divine glory; for such a glorious being must needs be a formidable enemy. (2.) God threatened to consume them all in a moment, and in order to that bid Moses and Aaron stand from among them, ver. 21. God thus shewed what their sin deserved, and how very provoking it was to him. See what a dangerous thing it is to have fellowship with sinners, and in the least to partake with them. Many of the congregation, it is likely, came only for company, following the crowd, or for curiosity to see the issue, yet not coming, as they ought to have done, to bear their testimony against the rebels, and openly to declare for God and Moses, they had like to have been all consumed in a moment. If we follow the herd into which the devil is entered, it is at our peril. 5. The humble intercession of Moses and Aaron, for the congregation, ver. 22. (1.) Their posture was importuning; they fell on their faces, prostrating themselves before God, as supplicants in good earnest, that they might prevail for sparing mercy. Though the people had treacherously deserted them, and struck in with those that were in arms against them, yet they approved themselves faithful to the trusts reposed in them, as shepherds of Israel, which were to stand in the breach when they saw the flock in danger. Note, If others fail in their duty to us, that doth not discharge us from our duty to them; nor take off the obligations we lie under to seek their welfare. (2.) Their prayer was a pleading prayer, and it proved a prevailing one: Now, God had destroyed them, if Moses had not turned away his wrath, Psal. cvi. 23. yet far be it from us to imagine, that Moses was more considerate; or more compassionate than God, in such a case as this; but God saw fit to shew his just displeasure against the sin of sinners by the sentence, and at the same time to shew his gracious condescension to the prayers of saints, by the revocation of the sentence at the intercession of Moses. Observe in the prayer, 1. The title they give to God. The God of the spirits of all flesh. See what man is; He is a spirit in flesh, a soul embodied; a creature wonderfully compounded of heaven and earth. See what God is; He is the God of the spirits of all mankind. He forms the spirit, Zech. xii. 1. He fathers it, Heb. xii. 9. He has an ability to fashion it, Psalm xxxiii. 15. and authority to dispose of it, for he hath said, All souls are mine, Ezek. xviii. 4. They insinuate hereby, that though as the God of the spirits of all flesh, he might in sovereignty consume this congregation in a moment, yet it was to be hoped, he would in mercy spare them, not only because they were the work of his own hands, and he had a propriety in them, but because being the God of spirits he knew their frame, and could distinguish between the leaders and the led; between those that sinned maliciously, and those who were drawn in by their wiles, and would make a difference accordingly in his judgments. 2. The argument they insist on, it is much the same with that which Abraham urged in his intercession for Sodom, Gen. xviii. 23. Wilt thou destroy the righteous with the wicked? Such is the plea here, Shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation? Not but that it was the sin of them all to join in this matter, but the great transgression was his that first hatched the treason. Note, Whatever God may do in sovereignty and strict justice, we have reason to hope, that he will not destroy a congre-

gation for the sin of one, but that righteousness and peace having kissed each other in the undertaking of the Redeemer, mercy shall rejoice against judgment. Moses knew that all the congregation must perish in the wilderness by degrees, yet he is thus earnest in prayer, that they might not be consumed at once, and would reckon it a favour to obtain a reprieve. Lord, let it alone this year.

23. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 24. Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. 25. And Moses rose up, and went unto Dathan, and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him. 26. And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins. 27. So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side: and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children. 28. And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works: for I have not done them of mine own mind. 29. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the LORD hath not sent me. 30. But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD. 31. ¶ And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: 32. And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. 33. ¶ They and all that appertained to them went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. 34. And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also.

We have here the determining of the controversy with Dathan and Abiram, that rebelled against Moses; as in the next paragraph, the like deciding of controversy with Korah and his company, that would be rivals with Aaron. It should seem that Dathan and Abiram had set up a spacious tabernacle in the midst of the tents of their families, where they kept court, met in consult, and hung out their flag of defiance against Moses; it is here called the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, ver. 24, 27. There, as in the place of rendezvous, Dathan and Abiram staid, when Korah and his friends went up to the tabernacle of the Lord, waiting the issue of their trial; but here we are told how they had their business done, before that trial was over. For God will take what method he pleases in his judgments. 1. Publick warning is given to the congregation to withdraw immediately from the tents of the rebels. (1.) God bids Moses speak to this purpose, ver. 24. This was in answer to Moses's prayer; he had begged that God would not destroy the whole congregation; well, faith God, I will not, provided they be so wise as to shift for their own safety, and get out of the way of danger. If they will quit the rebels, well and good, they shall not perish with them, otherwise let them take what follows. Note, We cannot expect to reap benefit by the prayers of our friends for our salvation, unless we our selves be diligent and faithful in making use of the means of salvation. For God never promised to save by miracles those that would not save themselves by means. Moses that had prayed for them must preach this to them, and warn them to flee from this wrath to come. (2.) Moses accordingly repairs to the head-quarters of the rebels, leaving Aaron at the door of the tabernacle, ver. 25. Dathan and Abiram had contumaciously refused to come up to him, ver. 12. yet he humbly condescends to go down to them, to try if he could yet convince and reclaim them. Ministers must thus with meekness instruct those that oppose themselves; and not think it below them to stoop to those that are most stubborn, for their good. Christ himself stretches out his hand to a rebellious and gainsaying people. The seventy elders of Israel attend Moses as his guard, to secure him from the insolences of the rabble; and by their presence to put an honour upon him, and if possible, to strike an awe upon the rebels. It is our duty to contribute all we can to the countenance and support of injured innocency and honour. (3.) Proclamation is made, that all manner of persons, as they tendered their own safety, should forthwith depart from the tents of these wicked men, ver. 26. and thus should signify, that they deserted their cause and interest, detested their crimes and counsels, and dreaded the punishment coming upon them. Note, Those that would not perish with sinners, must come out from among them, and be separate. In vain do we pray, Gather not our souls with sinners, if we save not our selves from the untoward generation. God's people are called out of Babylon, lest they share both in her

fins, and in her plagues, *Rev. xviii. 4.* 2. The congregation takes the warning, but the rebels themselves continue obstinate, *ver. 27.*
 1. God in mercy inclined the people to forsake the rebels. *They gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.* Both those whose lot it was to pitch near them, who doubtless with themselves removed their families, and all their effects; and those also who were come from all parts of the camp to see the issue. It was in answer to the prayer of Moses, that God thus stirred up the hearts of the congregation to shift for their own preservation. Note, To those whom God will save he gives repentance; that they may *recover themselves out of the snare of the devil.* Grace to separate from evil doers, is one of the things that accompany salvation. 2. God in justice left the rebels to the obstinacy and hardness of their own hearts. Though they saw themselves abandoned by all their neighbours, and set up as a mark to the arrows of God's justice: yet instead of falling down and humbling themselves before God and Moses, owning their crime, and begging pardon, instead of fleeing, and dispersing themselves to seek for shelter in the crowd; they impudently *stood in the door of their tents*, as if they would out-face God himself, and dare him to do his worst. Thus were their hearts hardened to their own destruction, and they were fearless when their case was most fearful. But what pity was it that their little children, who were not capable of guilt or fear, should by the presumption of their parents be put in this audacious posture! Happy they who are taught betimes to bow before God, and not as those unhappy little ones to stand it out against him! 3. Sentence is solemnly pronounced upon them by Moses in the name of the Lord, and the decision of the controversy is put upon the execution of that sentence by the almighty power of God. Moses, by divine instinct and direction, when the eyes of all Israel were fastened upon him, waiting the event, moved with a just and holy indignation at the impudence of the rebels, boldly puts the whole matter to a surprizing issue, *ver. 28, 29, 30.* (1.) If the rebels die a common death, he will be content to be called and counted an impostor; not only if they die a natural death, but if they die by any sort of judgment that has formerly been executed on other malefactors, if they die by the plague, or by fire from heaven, or by the sword, then say, God has disowned me: but, (2.) If the earth open and swallow them up, (a punishment without precedent) then let all the house of Israel know assuredly that I am God's servant, sent by him, and employed for him, and those that fight against me, fight against him. The judgment it self would have been proof enough of God's displeasure against the rebels, and would have given all men to *understand that they had provoked the Lord*; but when it was thus solemnly foretold, and appealed to by Moses beforehand, when there was not the least previous indication of it from without, the convincing evidence of it was much the stronger, and it was put beyond dispute, that he was not only a servant but a favourite of heaven, who was so intimately acquainted with the divine counsels, and could obtain such extraordinary appearances of the divine power in its vindication. 4. Execution is immediately done. It appeared that God and his servant Moses understood one another very well, for as soon as ever Moses had spoken the word, God did the work, the earth *clave asunder*, *ver. 31. opened her mouth and swallowed them all up*, them and theirs, *ver. 32.* and then *closed upon them*, *ver. 33.* This judgment was, (1.) unparalleled. God in it *created a new thing*, did what he never did before, for he has many arrows in his quiver; and there are *diversities of operations* in wrath as well as mercy. Dathan and Abiram thought themselves safe because they were at a distance from the *Shechinah*, whence the fire of the Lord had sometimes issued, *qui procul à Jove* (they say) *procul à fulmine*; but God made them know that he was not tied up to one way of punishing, the earth, when he pleaseth, shall serve his justice as effectually as the fire. (2.) It was very terrible to the sinners themselves, to go down alive into their own graves; dead and buried in an instant; to go down thus to the bars of the pit, when they were in their *full strength, wholly at ease and quiet.* (3.) It was severe upon their poor children, who, for the greater terror of the judgment, and fuller indication of the divine wrath, perished as parts of their parents; in which though we cannot particularly tell either how bad they might be to deserve it, or how good God might be otherwise to them to compensate it, yet this we are sure in the general, that infinite justice did them no wrong. *Far be it from God, that he should do iniquity.* (4.) It was altogether miraculous. The cleaving of the earth was as wonderful, and as much above the power of nature, as the cleaving of the sea; and the closing of the earth again, more so than the closing of the waters. God has all the creatures at his command, and can make any of them, when he pleaseth, instruments of his justice; nor will any of them be our friends, if he be our enemy. God now confirmed to Israel, what Moses had lately taught them in that prayer of his, *Psal. xc. 11. Who knows the power of thine anger?* He hath when he pleaseth *strange punishments for the workers of iniquity*, *Job xxxi. 3.* Let us therefore conclude, *Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?* (5.) It was very significant. They *set their mouths against the heavens*, and their *throat was an open sepulchre*, justly therefore doth the earth open her mouth upon them, and swallow them up. They made a rent in the congregation, justly therefore is

the earth rent under them. Presumptuous sinners, that hate to be reformed, are a burthen to the earth, the whole creation groans under them, which here was signified by this, that the earth sunk under these rebels, as weary of bearing them, and being under them. And considering how the earth is still in like manner loaded with the weight of iniquity, we have reason to wonder, that this was the only time it ever sunk under its load. Lastly, It was typical of the eternal ruin of sinners, that die impenitent, who, perhaps in allusion to this, are said to *sink down into the pit*, *Psal. ix. 15.* and to *go down quick into hell*, *Psal. lv. 15.* But David even when he *sinks in deep mire*, yet prays in faith, *Let not the pit shut her mouth upon me*, as it doth on the damned, between whom and life there is a gulf fixed, *Psal. lxxix. 2—15.* His case was bad, but not like this; desperate. 5. All Israel is alarmed at the judgment, *ver. 34. They fled at the cry of them.* They cried for help when it was too late; their doleful shrieks, instead of fetching their neighbours in to their relief, drove them so much the farther off; for knowing their own guilt, and one another's, they hastened one another, saying, *Left the earth swallow us up also.* Note, Others ruins should be our warnings. Could we by faith hear the outcries of those that are gone down to the bottomless pit, we would give more diligence than we do to escape for our lives, lest we also come into that condemnation.

35. And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense. 36. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 37. Speak unto Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, that he take up the censers out of the burning, and scatter thou the fire yonder; for they are hallowed. 38. The censers of these sinners against their own souls, let them make them broad plates for a covering of the altar: for they offered them before the LORD, therefore they are hallowed: and they shall be a sign unto the children of Israel. 39. And Eleazar the priest took the brasen censers, wherewith they that were burnt had offered; and they were made broad plates for a covering of the altar: 40. To be a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger, which is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before the LORD: that he be not as Korah, and as his company: as the LORD said to him by the hand of Moses.

We must now look back to the door of the tabernacle, where we left the pretenders to the priesthood with their censers in their hands ready to offer incense; and here we find, 1. Vengeance taken on them, *ver. 35.* It is probable, at the same time that the earth opened in the camp to swallow up Dathan and Abiram, *a fire went out from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense*, and Aaron that stood with them was preserved alive. This punishment was not indeed so new a thing as the former, for Nadab and Abihu thus died; but it was no less strange or dreadful, and in it it appeared, (1.) That *our God is a consuming fire.* Is thunder a sensible indication of the terror of his voice? Lightning is so of the power of his hand. We must see in this his *fiery indignation* which *devours the adversaries*, and infer from it what a fearful thing it is to *fall into the hands of the living God*, *Heb. x. 27—31.* (2.) That it is at our peril, if we meddle with that which doth not belong to us. God is jealous of the honour of his own institutions, and will not have them invaded. It is most probable, Korah himself was consumed with those two hundred and fifty that pretended to offer incense, for the priesthood was the thing that he aimed at, and therefore we have reason to think he would not quit his post at the door of the tabernacle. But behold, they are made sacrifices to the justice of God, who flattered themselves with the hopes of being priests. Had they been content with their office as Levites, which was sacred and honourable, and better than they deserved, they might have lived and died with joy and reputation: but like the angels that sinned, *leaving their first estate*, and aiming at the honours that were not appointed them, they were thrust down to Hades, their censers struck out of their hands, and their breath out of their bodies, by a burning, which typified *the vengeance of eternal fire.* 2. Care is taken to preserve and perpetuate the remembrance of this vengeance. No mention is made of the taking up of their carcases, the scripture leaves them as dung upon the face of the earth; but orders are given about their censers. 1. That they be secured, because they are hallowed; Eleazar is charged with this, *ver. 37.* Those invaders of the priesthood had proceeded so far, by the divine patience and permission, as to kindle their incense with fire from off the altar, which they were suffered to use for experiment-sake: but as soon as they had kindled their fire, God kindled another which put a fatal final period to their pretensions; now Eleazar is ordered to *scatter the fire*, with the incense that was kindled with it, in some unclean place without the camp, to signify God's abhorrence of their offering, as a polluted thing; *The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination to the Lord*: But he is to gather up the censers out of the mingled burning, God's fire, and theirs; because *they are hallowed.* Having been once put to a holy use,

use, and that by God's own order, (though only for trial) they must not return to common service; so some understand it: rather, *they are devoted*; they are an anathema; and therefore, as all devoted things, they must be made some way or other serviceable to the glory of God. 2. That they be used in the service of the sanctuary, not in censers, that would rather have put honour upon the usurpers, whose disgrace was intended; nor was there occasion for brazen censers, the golden altar was served with golden ones; but they must be beaten into *broad plates* for a *covering of the brazen altar*, ver. 38, 39, 40. These pretenders thought to have ruined the altar, by laying the priesthood in common again; but to shew that Aaron's office was so far from being shaken by their impotent malice, that it was rather confirmed by it, their censers which offered to rival his, were used both for the adorning, and for the preserving of the altar at which he ministered. Yet this was not all; this *covering of the altar* must be a *memorial to the children of Israel*, throughout their generations, of this great event. Though there was so much in it astonishing, and though Moses was to record it in his history, yet there was a danger of its being forgotten in process of time; impressions that seem deep are not always durable; therefore it was necessary to appoint this record of the judgment; that the Levites who attended this altar, and had their inferior services appointed them, might learn to keep within their bounds, and be afraid of transgressing them, lest they should be made like Korah and his company, who were Levites, and would have been priests. These censers were preserved in *terror*, that others might hear and fear, and do no more presumptuously. Thus has God provided that *his wonderful works*, both in mercy and judgment, should be *had in everlasting remembrance*, that the end of them may be answered, and they may serve for instruction and admonition, to those *on whom the ends of the world are come*.

41. ¶ But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses, and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the LORD.

42. And it came to pass when the congregation was gathered against Moses, and against Aaron, that they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation: and behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared. 43. And Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of the congregation. 44. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 45. Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment: and they fell upon their faces. 46. ¶ And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the LORD; the plague is begun. 47. And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people. 48. And he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stayed. 49. Now they that died in the plague, were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah. 50. And Aaron returned unto Moses, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the plague was stayed.

Here is, 1. A new rebellion raised the very next day against Moses and Aaron. Be astonished, O heavens, at this, and wonder, O earth! Was there ever such an instance of the incurable corruption of sinners? ver. 41. On the morrow the body of the people mutinied; (1.) Though they were but newly terrified by the sight of the punishment of the rebels; the shrieks of those sinking sinners, those sinners against their own souls were yet sounding in their ears, the smell of the fire yet remained, and the gaping earth was scarce thoroughly closed, and yet the same sins are re-acted, and all these warnings slighted. (2.) Though they were but newly saved from sharing in the same punishment, and the survivors were as *brands plucked out of the burning*, yet they fly in the face of Moses and Aaron, to whose intercession they owed their preservation. Their charge runs very high, *ye have killed the people of the Lord*. Could any thing have been said more unjustly and maliciously? They canonize the rebels, calling them the *people of the Lord*, who died in arms against him; they stigmatize divine justice itself; it was plain enough Moses and Aaron had no hand in their death, they did what they could to save them; so that in charging them with murder, they did in effect charge God himself with it. The continued obstinacy of this people, notwithstanding the terrors of God's law, as it was given on mount Sinai, and the terrors of his judgments, as they were here executed on the disobedient, shews how necessary the grace of God is to the effectual change of mens hearts and lives, without which the most likely means will never attain the end. Love will do what fear could not. 2. God's speedy appearing against the rebels. When they were gathered against Moses and Aaron, per-

haps with design to depose or murder them, they *looked towards the tabernacle*, as if their misgiving consciences expected some frowns from thence, and *behold, the glory of the Lord appeared*, ver. 42. for the protection of his servants, and confusion of his and their accusers and adversaries. Moses and Aaron thereupon *came before the tabernacle*, partly for their own safety, there they took sanctuary from the strife of tongues, *Psal. xxvii. 5. xxxi. 20.* and partly for advice, to know what was the mind of God upon this occasion, ver. 43. justice hereupon declares, they deserve to be *consumed in a moment*, ver. 45. Why should they live another day, who hate to be reformed, and whose rebellions are their daily practices? Let just vengeance take place, and do its work, and the trouble with them will soon be over; only Moses and Aaron must first be secured. 3. The intercession which Moses and Aaron made for them. Though they had as much reason one would think, as Elias had to *make intercession against Israel*, Rom. xi. 7. Yet they forgive and forget the indignities offered them, and are the best friends their enemies have. (1.) They both *fell on their faces*, humbly to intercede with God for mercy, knowing how great their provocation was. This they had done several times before, upon the like occasion; and though the people had basely requited them for it, yet God having graciously accepted them, they still have recourse to the same method. This is *praying always*. (2.) Moses perceiving that the *plague was begun in the congregation* of the rebels, *i. e.* that body of them which was *gathered together* against Moses, sends Aaron by an act of his priestly office to make atonement for them, ver. 46. And Aaron readily went, burnt incense between the living and the dead, not to purify the infected air, but to pacify an offended God, and so staid the progress of the judgment, ver. 47.

By this it appeared, 1. That Aaron was a very good man, and a man that had a true love for the children of his people, though they hated and envied him. Though God was now avenging his quarrel, and pleading the cause of his priesthood, yet he interposeth to turn away God's wrath. Nay, forgetting his age and gravity, he ran into the midst of the congregation to help them. He did not say, Let them smart a while, and then when I come I shall be the more welcome, but as one tender of the life of every Israelite, he makes all possible speed into the gap at which death was entering. Moses and Aaron had been charged with *killing the people of the Lord*, with which they might justly have upbraided them now; could they expect those to be their saviours, whom they had so invidiously called their murderers? But those good men have taught us here by their example, not to be sullen towards those that are peevish with us, nor to take the advantage which men give us by their provoking language, to deny them any real kindness, which it is in the power of our hands to do them. We must render good for evil. 2. That Aaron was a very bold man; bold, to venture into the midst of an enraged rabble, that were gathered together against him, and who for ought he knew, might be the more exasperated by the plague that was begun: bold, to venture into the midst of the infection, where the arrows of death flew thickest, and hundreds, nay thousands were falling on his right and left hand. To save their lives he put his own into his hand, not counting it dear to him, so he might but fulfil his ministry. 3. That Aaron was a *man of God*, and *ordained for men, in things pertaining to God*. His call to the priesthood was hereby abundantly confirmed, and set above all contradiction; God had not only saved his life, when the intruders were cut off, but now made him an instrument of saving Israel. Compare the censer of Aaron here, with the *censers of those sinners against their own souls*. Those provoked God's anger, this pacified it; those destroyed mens lives, this saved them; no room therefore is left to doubt of Aaron's call to the priesthood. Note, Those make out the best title to publick honours, that lay out themselves most for the publick good, and obtain mercy of the Lord to be faithful and useful. If any man will be great, let him make himself the servant of all. 4. That Aaron was a *type of Christ*, who came into the world to make atonement for sin, and to turn away the wrath of God from us, and who by his mediation and intercession *stands between the living and the dead*, to secure his chosen Israel to himself, and save them out of the midst of a world infected with sin and the curse. 4. The result and issue of the whole matter. 1. God's justice was glorified in the death of some. Great execution the sword of the Lord did in a very little time. Though Aaron made all the haste he could, yet before he could reach his post of service, there were fourteen thousand seven hundred men laid dead upon the spot, ver. 49. There were but a few comparatively that died about the matter of Korah, the ring-leaders only were made examples, but the people not being led to repentance, by the patience and forbearance of God with them, justice is not now so sparing of the blood of Israelites. They cried out of the death of a few hundreds as an unmerciful slaughter made among the *people of the Lord*, but here God silenceth that complaint by the slaughter of many thousands. Note, Those that quarrel with lesser judgments, prepare greater for themselves; for when God judgeth he will overcome. 2. His mercy was glorified in the preservation of the rest; God shewed them what he could do by his power, and what he might do in justice, but then shewed them what he would do in his love and pity, he would preserve them a people to himself for

all this, in and by a mediator. The cloud of Aaron's incense coming from his hand staid the plague. Note, It is much for the glory of God's goodness, that many a time even in wrath he remembers mercy; and even when judgments have been begun, prayer has put a stop to them; so ready is he to forgive; and so little pleasure doth he take in the death of sinners.

C H A P. XVII.

Enough had been done in the chapter before to quash all the pretensions of the families of the tribe of Levi; that would set up in competition with Aaron, and to make it appear that Aaron was the head of that tribe; but it seems when that matter was settled, the princes of the rest of the tribes began to murmur; if the head of a tribe must be a priest, why not the head of some other tribe than that of Levi; he that searcheth the heart knew this thought to be in the breast of some of them; and before it broke out into any overt act graciously anticipated it, to prevent bloodshed; and it is done by miracle in this chapter, not a miracle of wrath, as before, but of grace. 1. The matter is put upon trial by the bringing of twelve rods, one for each prince, before the Lord, ver. 1—7. 2. Upon trial the matter is determined by the miraculous blossoming of Aaron's rod, ver. 8, 9. 3. The decision of the controversy is registered by the preservation of the rod, ver. 10, 11. 4. The people acquiesce in it with some reluctance, ver. 12, 13.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, and take of every one of them a rod, according to the house of their fathers, of all their princes, according to the house of their fathers, twelve rods: write thou every mans name upon his rod. 3. And thou shalt write Aarons name upon the rod of Levi: for one rod shall be for the head of the house of their fathers. 4. And thou shalt lay them up in the tabernacle of the congregation before the testimony, where I will meet with you. 5. And it shall come to pass, that the mans rod whom I shall choose, shall blossom: and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel, whereby they murmur against you. 6. ¶ And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, and every one of their princes gave him a rod apiece, for each prince one, according to their fathers houses, even twelve rods: and the rod of Aaron was among their rods. 7. And Moses laid up the rods before the LORD, in the tabernacle of witness.

Here is, 1. Orders given for the bringing in of a rod for every tribe; (which was significant enough, for the word here used for a rod sometimes signifies a tribe, as particularly *Numb. xxxiv. 13.*) that God by a miracle wrought on purpose, might make it known on whom he had conferred the honour of the priesthood. (1.) It seems then the priesthood was a preferment worth seeking and striving for, even by the princes of the tribes. It is an honour to the greatest of men to be employed in the service of God. Yet perhaps these contended for it, rather for the sake of the profit and power that attended the office, than for the sake of that in it which was divine and sacred. (2.) It seems likewise, after all that had been done to settle this matter, there were those who would be ready upon any occasion to contest it. They would not acquiesce in the divine appointment, but would make an interest in opposition to it. They strive with God for the dominion, and the question is, whose will shall stand; God will rule, but Israel will not be ruled, and that is the quarrel. (3.) It is an instance of the grace of God, that having wrought divers miracles to punish sin, he would work one more on purpose to prevent it. God has effectually provided, that the obstinate shall be left inexcusable, and every mouth shall be stopped. Israel was very prone to murmur both against God, and against their governors; now, saith God, *I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel*, ver. 5. If any thing will convince them, they shall be convinced; and if this will not convince them, nothing will. This was to be to them, as Christ saith the sign of the prophet Jonas, that is, his own resurrection should be, to the men of that generation, the highest proof of his mission that should be given them.

The directions are, (1.) That twelve rods or staves should be brought in; it is probable, they were not now fresh cut out of a tree, for then the miracle had not been so great: But that they were the staves which the princes ordinarily used as ensigns of their authority; of which we read, *chap. xxi. 18.* old dry staves, that had no sap in them, and it is very possible they might all be made of the almond-tree. It should seem they were but twelve in all with Aaron's, for when Levi comes into the count, Ephraim and Manasseh make but one, under the name of Joseph. (2.) That the name of each prince should be written upon his rod, that every man might know his own, and to prevent contests. Writing is oft a good preservative against strife, for what is written may be appealed to. (3.) That they should be laid up in the tabernacle, for one night, before the testimony, i. e. before the ark, which with its mercy-seat was a symbol, token, or testimony of God's

presence with them. (4.) They were to expect, being told it before, that the tribe, or prince whom God chose to the priesthood his rod should *bud and blossom*, ver. 5. It was requisite they should be told of it, that it might appear not to be casual but according to the counsel and will of God. 2. The preparing of the rods accordingly. The princes brought them in, some of them perhaps fondly expecting that the choice would fall upon them, and all of them thinking it honour enough to be competitors with Aaron, and to stand candidates, even for the priesthood, ver. 7. and *Moses laid them up before the Lord*. He did not object, that the matter was sufficiently settled already, and enough done to convince those that were not invincibly hardened in their prejudices. He did not undertake to determine the controversy himself, though it might easily have been done, nor did he suggest that it would be to no purpose to offer satisfaction to a people that were willingly blind, but since God will have it so, he did his part, and lodged the case before the Lord, to whom the appeal was made by consent, and left it with him.

8. And it came to pass that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness: and behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds. 9. And Moses brought out all the rods from before the LORD, unto all the children of Israel: and they looked, and took every man his rod. 10. ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Bring Aarons rod again, before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels; and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not. 11. And Moses did so: as the LORD commanded him, so did he. 12. And the children of Israel spake unto Moses, saying, Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish. 13. Whosoever cometh any thing near unto the tabernacle of the LORD, shall die: shall we be consumed with dying?

Here is, 1. The final determination of the controversy concerning the priesthood, by a miracle, ver. 8, 9. The rods, or staves, were brought out from the most holy place where they were laid up, and publicly produced before the people; and while all the rest of the rods remained as they were, Aaron's rod only of a dry stick became a living branch, budded, and bloomed, and yielded almonds. In some places there were buds, in others blossoms, in others fruit, at the same time; this was miraculous, and took away all suspicion of a fraud, as if in the night Moses had taken away Aaron's rod, and put a living branch of an almond-tree in the room of it; for no ordinary branch would have buds, blossoms, and fruits upon it, all at once. Now, 1. This was a plain indication to the people that Aaron was chosen to the priesthood; and not any other of the princes of the tribes. Thus he was distinguished from them, and manifested to be under the special blessing of heaven, which sometimes yieldeth increase, where there is neither planting nor watering by the hand of man. Bishop Hall here observes, that fruitfulness is the best evidence of a divine call, and that the plants of God's setting, and the boughs cut off from them, will flourish. See *Psal. xcii. 12, 13, 14.* The trees of the Lord, though they seem dry trees, are full of sap. 2. It was a very proper sign to represent the priesthood it self, which was hereby confirmed to Aaron, (1.) That it should be fruitful, useful and serviceable to the church of God. It produced not only blossoms, but almonds; for the priesthood was designed, not only for an honour to Aaron, but for a blessing to Israel. Thus Christ ordained his apostles and ministers, that they should go and bring forth fruit, and that their fruit should remain, John xv. 16. (2.) That there should be a succession of priests; here were not only almonds for the present, but buds and blossoms, promising more hereafter. Thus hath Christ provided in his church, that a seed should serve him, from generation to generation. (3.) That yet this priesthood should not be perpetual, but in process of time, like the branches and blossoms of a tree, should fail and wither. The flourishing of the almond-tree is mentioned as one of the signs of old age, *Eccl. xii. 5.* This character was betimes put upon that priesthood which soon became old, and ready to vanish away, Heb. viii. 13. 3. It was a type and figure of Christ, and his priesthood: for he is the man, the branch, Zech. vi. 12. that is to be a priest upon his throne, as it follows there; and was to grow up before God, as this before the ark, like a tender plant, and a root out of a dry ground, Isa. liii. 2. 2. The record of this determination, by the preserving of the rod before the testimony, in perpetuum rei memoriam, ver. 10, 11. It is probable, the buds, and blossoms, and fruit continued fresh, the same divine power that produced them in a night, preserved them for ages, at least so long as it was necessary for a token against the rebels. So it was a standing miracle, and the continuance of it, was an undeniable proof of the truth of it. Even the leaf of God's trees shall not wither, *Psal. i. 3.* This rod was preserved, as the censers were, to take away their murmurings, that they die not. Note, 1. The design of God in all his providences, both mercies and judgments, and in the memorials of them, is to take away

away sin, and to prevent that. These things are done, these things *written that we sin not*, 1. John ii. 1. Christ was manifested to take away sin. 2. What God doth for the taking away of sin, is done in real kindness to us, *that we die not*. All the bitter potions he gives, and all the sharp methods he uses with us, are for the cure of a disease which otherwise would certainly be fatal. Bishop Hall observes here, that the tables of the law, the pot of manna, and Aaron's rod, were preserved together in or about the ark (the apostle takes notice of them all three together, *Heb. ix. 4.*) to shew to after-ages how the ancient church was taught, and fed, and ruled; and infers, how precious the doctrine, sacraments, and government of the church is to him, and should be to us. The rod of Moses was used in working many miracles, yet we do not find that that was preserved, for the keeping of that would serve only to gratify mens curiosity; but the rod of Aaron, which carried its miracle along with it, was carefully preserved, because that would be of standing use to convince mens consciences, to silence all disputes about the priesthood, and to confirm the faith of God's Israel in his institutions. Such is the difference between the sacraments Christ has appointed for edification, and the reliques men have devised for superstition. 3. The outcry of the people hereupon, *ver. 12, 13. Behold we die, we perish, we all perish: Shall we be consumed with dying?* This may be considered as the language, either, (1.) Of a repining people, quarrelling with the judgments of God, which by their own pride and obstinacy they had brought upon themselves. They seem to speak despairingly, as if God were a hard master, that fought advantage against them, and took all occasions to pick quarrels with them, so that if they trod never so little awry, if they stepped never so little beyond their bounds, they must die, they must perish, they must all perish, basely insinuating, that God would never be satisfied with their blood and ruin, till he had made an end of them all, and they were consumed with dying. Thus they seem to be like a *wild bull in a net*, full of the fury of the Lord, Isa. li. 20. fretting that God was too hard for them, and they were forced to truckle, only because they could not help it. Note, It is a very wicked thing to fret against God when we are in affliction, and in our distress thus to trespass yet more. If we die, if we perish, it is long of our selves, and the blame will lie upon our own heads. Or, (2.) Of a repenting people; many interpreters take it as speaking their submission. Now we see it is the will of God we should keep our distance, and it is at our peril if we draw nearer than is appointed; and we submit to the divine will in this appointment, we will not contend any more, lest we all perish: and they engage Moses to intercede for them, that they might not be all consumed with dying. Thus the point was gained, and in this matter God quite took away their murmurings, and from henceforward they acquiesced. Note, When God judgeth he will overcome, and one way or other will oblige the most obstinate gainsayers to confess their folly sooner or later; and that wherein they dealt proudly he was above them. *Vicisti Galilee.*

C H A P. XVIII.

Aaron being now fully established in the priesthood, abundantly to his own satisfaction, and to the satisfaction of the people, (which was the good God brought out of the evil opposition made to him) in this chapter God gives him full instructions concerning his office; or rather repeats those he had before given him. He tells him, 1. What must be his work, and the care and charge committed to him; and what assistance he should have from the Levites in that work, ver. 1—7. 2. What should be his wages, and the Levites, for this work. 1. The perquisites or fees peculiar to the priests, ver. 8—19. 2. The settled maintenance of the Levites, ver. 20—24. 3. The portion which must be paid to the priests out of the Levites maintenance, ver. 25—32. Thus every one knew what he had to do, and what he had to live upon.

1. **A**ND the LORD said unto Aaron, Thou, and thy sons, and thy fathers house with thee, shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary: and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood. 2. And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee, shall minister before the tabernacle of witness. 3. And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tabernacle: only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary and the altar, that neither they, nor you also die. 4. And they shall be joined unto thee, and keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, for all the service of the tabernacle: and a stranger shall not come nigh unto you. 5. And ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar; that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel. 6. And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel: to you they are given as a gift for the LORD, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. 7. Therefore thou and thy sons with

thee, shall keep your priests office, for every thing of the altar, and within the vail, and ye shall serve: I have given your priests office *unto you*, as a service of gift: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

The coherence of this chapter with that foregoing is very observable. 1. The people in the close of that chapter had complained of the difficulty and peril that there was in drawing near to God, which put them under some dreadful apprehensions, that the tabernacle in the midst of them, which they hoped would have been their joy and glory, would rather be their terror and ruin; now in answer to this complaint, God here gives them to understand by Aaron, that the priests should come near for them as their representatives; so that though the people were obliged to keep their distance, yet that should not at all redound to their disgrace or prejudice, but their comfortable communion with God should be kept up by the interposal of the priests. 2. A great deal of honour God had now newly put upon Aaron, his rod had budded, and blossomed, when the rods of the rest of the princes remained dry, and destitute either of fruit or ornament; now left Aaron should be puffed up with the abundance of the favours that were done him, and the miracles that were wrought for the support of him in his high station, God comes to him to mind him of the burthen that was laid upon him, and the duty required from him as a priest. He would see reason not to be proud of his preferment, but to receive the honours of his office with reverence and holy trembling, when he considered, how great the care and charge was that was committed to him, and how hard it would be for him to give a good account of the discharge of it. *Be not high-minded, but fear.* 1. God tells him of the danger that attended his dignity, *ver. 1.* (1.) That both the priests and Levites (both thou, and thy sons, and thy father's house) should *bear the iniquity of the sanctuary*, i. e. If the sanctuary were profaned by the intrusion of strangers, or persons in their uncleanness, the blame should lie upon the Levites and priests, who ought to have kept them off. Though the sinner that thrust in presumptuously should die in his iniquity, yet his blood should be required at the hands of the watchmen. Or, it may be taken more generally, if any of the duties or offices of the sanctuary be neglected, if any service be not done in its season, or not according to the law, if any thing be lost or misplaced in the remove of the sanctuary, you shall be accountable for it, and answer it at your peril. (2.) That the priests should themselves *bear the iniquity of the priesthood*, i. e. If they either neglected any part of their work, or permitted any other persons to invade their office, and take their work out of their hands, they should bear the blame of it. Note, The greater the trust is of work and power that is committed to us, the greater is our danger of contracting guilt, by falsifying and betraying that trust. This is a good reason, why we should neither be envious at others honours, nor ambitious our selves of high places, because great dignity exposeth us to great iniquity. Those that are intrusted with the charge of the sanctuary, will have a great deal to answer for. Who would covet the care of souls, who considers the account that must be given of that care? 2. He tells him of the duty that attended his dignity. 1. That he and his sons must *minister before the tabernacle of witness*, *ver. 2. i. e.* as bishop Patrick explains it, *before the most holy place*, in which the ark was; on the outside of the vail of that tabernacle, but within the *door of the tabernacle of the congregation*; they were to attend the golden altar, the table, and candlestick, which no Levite might approach to. *Ye shall serve*, *ver. 7.* not ye shall rule; it was never intended that they should lord it over God's heritage, but ye shall serve God and the congregation. Note, The priesthood is a service. *If any desire the office of a bishop, he desires a good work.* Ministers must remember that they are ministers, that is, servants; of whom it is required, that they be humble, diligent and faithful. 2. That the Levites must assist him and his sons, and minister to them in all the *service of the tabernacle*, *ver. 2, 3, 4.* though they must by no means come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary, nor at the altar meddle with the great services of burning the fat and sprinkling the blood. Aaron's family was very small, and as they increased, the rest of the families of Israel would increase likewise, so that their hands neither were now, nor were like to be, sufficient for all the service of the tabernacle, therefore (saith God) *the Levites shall be joined to thee*, *ver. 2.* again *ver. 4.* where there seems to be an allusion to the name of Levi, which signifies joined. Many of the Levites had of late set themselves against Aaron, but from henceforward God promiseth that they should be heartily joined to him in interest and affection, and should no more contest with him. It was a good sign to Aaron that God owned him, when he inclined the hearts of those concerned to own him too. The Levites are said to be given as a gift to the priests, *ver. 6.* Note, We are to value it as a great gift of the divine bounty to have those joined to us, that will be helpful and serviceable to us in the service of God. 3. That both priests and Levites must carefully watch against the profanation of sacred things. The Levites must *keep the charge of the tabernacle*, that no stranger (i. e. none who upon any account was forbidden to come) might *come nigh*, *ver. 4.* and that upon pain of death, *ver. 7.* And the priests must *keep the charge of the sanctuary*, *ver. 5.* must instruct the people, and admonish them con-

concerning the due distance they were to keep, and not suffer them to break the bounds set them, as Korah's company had done, that there be *no wrath any more upon the children of Israel*. Note, The preventing of sin is the preventing of wrath; and the mischief sin has done, should be a warning to us for the future, to watch against it both in our selves, and others.

8. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Behold, I also have given thee the charge of mine heave-offerings, of all the hallowed things of the children of Israel; unto thee have I given them, by reason of the anointing, and to thy sons by an ordinance for ever. 9. This shall be thine of the most holy things, *reserved* from the fire: every oblation of theirs, every meat-offering of theirs, and every sin-offering of theirs, and every trespass-offering of theirs, which they shall render unto me, *shall be* most holy for thee and for thy sons. 10. In the most holy place shalt thou eat it; every male shall eat it: it shall be holy unto thee. 11. And this is thine; the heave-offering of their gift, with all the wave-offerings of the children of Israel: I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons, and to thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: every one that is clean in thy house shall eat of it. 12. All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat, the first-fruits of them which they shall offer unto the LORD, them have I given thee: 13. And whatsoever is first ripe in the land, which they shall bring unto the LORD, shall be thine; every one that is clean in thine house shall eat of it. 14. Every thing devoted in Israel, shall be thine. 15. Every thing that openeth the matrice in all flesh, which they bring unto the LORD, *whether it be* of men or beasts, shall be thine: nevertheless the first-born of man shalt thou surely redeem, and the firstling of unclean beasts shalt thou redeem. 16. And those that are to be redeemed, from a month old shalt thou redeem according to thine estimation, for the money of five shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs. 17. But the firstling of a cow, or the firstling of a sheep, or the firstling of a goat, thou shalt not redeem, they are holy: thou shalt sprinkle their blood upon the altar, and shalt burn their fat for an offering made by fire, for a sweet savour unto the LORD. 18. And the flesh of them shall be thine, as the wave-breast, and as the right shoulder are thine. 19. All the heave-offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer unto the LORD, have I given thee, and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: it is a covenant of salt for ever, before the LORD, unto thee and to thy seed with thee.

The priests service is called a warfare, and who goes a warfare at his own charges! As they were well employed, so they were well provided for, and well paid. None shall serve God for nought. All believers are spiritual priests, and God has promised to take care of them; they shall *dwell in the land*, and *verily they shall be fed*, and shall not want any thing. *Godliness has the promise of the life that now is*. And from this plentiful provision here made for the priests, the apostle infers, that it is the duty of christian churches to maintain their ministers; they that *served at the altar, lived upon the altar*. So they that preach the gospel, should *live upon the gospel*, and live comfortably, 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14. Scandalous maintenance makes scandalous ministers.

Now observe, 1. That much of the provision that was made for them arose out of the sacrifices, which they themselves were employed to offer. They had the skins of almost all the sacrifices, which they might sell, and they had a considerable share out of the meat-offerings, sin-offerings, &c. They that had the charge of the offerings, had the benefit of them, ver. 8. Note, God's work is its own wages, and his service carries its recompence along with it. Even in keeping of God's commandments there is great reward. The present pleasures of religion are part of its pay. 2. That they had not only a good table kept for them, but money likewise in their pockets for the redemption of the first-born, and those firstlings of cattle which might not be offered in sacrifice. Thus their maintenance was such, as left them altogether *disentangled from the affairs of this life*; they had no grounds to occupy, no land to till, no vineyards to dress, no cattle to tend, no visible estate to take care of, and yet had a more plentiful income than any other families whatsoever. Thus God ordered it, (1.) That they might be the more entirely addicted to their ministry, and not diverted from it, or disturbed in it, by any worldly care or business. The ministry requires a whole man. (2.) That they might be examples of living by faith, not only in God's providence, but in his ordinance. They lived from hand to mouth, that they might learn to take no thought for the morrow; sufficient for the day would be the provision thereof: and they had no estates to leave their children, that they might by faith leave them

to the care of that God, who had *fed them all their lives long*. 3. Of the provision that was made for their tables, some is said to be *most holy*, ver. 9, 10. which was to be eaten by the priests themselves, and in the court of the tabernacle only; but other perquisites were *less holy*, of which their families might eat, at their own houses, provided they were *clean*, ver. 11, 12, 13. see Lev. xxii. 10, &c. 4. It is commanded, that the *best of the oil*, and *the best of the wine and wheat* should be offered, for the *first-fruits unto the Lord*, which the priest was to have, ver. 12. Note, We must always serve and honour God with the best we have, for he is the best, and best deserves it; he is the first, and therefore must have the first ripe. Those that think to save charges by putting God off with the refuse, do but deceive themselves, for *God is not mocked*. 5. All this is given to the priests, *by reason of the anointing*, ver. 8. It was not for the sake of their personal merits above other Israelites, that they had these tributes paid them, be it known unto them; but purely for the sake of the office to which they were anointed. Thus all the comforts that are given to the Lord's people, are given them *by reason of the anointing*, which they have received. 6. It is said to be given them *by an ordinance for ever*, ver. 8. and it is a *covenant of salt for ever*, ver. 19. As long as the priesthood should continue, this should continue to be the maintenance of it, that this lamp might not go out for want of oil to keep it burning. Thus provision is made, that a gospel ministry should continue till Christ comes, by an ordinance for ever. *Lo, I am with you* (that is, their maintenance and support) *always, even to the end of the world*. Thanks be to the Redeemer, it is the word which he has commanded to a thousand generations.

20. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part, and thine inheritance among the children of Israel. 21. And behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel, for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, *even* the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. 22. Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they bear sin, and die. 23. But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity: *It shall be* a statute for ever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance. 24. But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as an heave-offering unto the LORD, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance. 25. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 26. Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave-offering of it for the LORD, *even a tenth part* of the tithe. 27. And *this* your heave-offering shall be reckoned unto you, as though *it were* the corn of the threshing-floor, and as the fulness of the wine-press. 28. Thus you also shall offer an heave-offering unto the LORD, of all your tithes which ye receive of the children of Israel: and ye shall give thereof the LORD's heave-offering to Aaron the priest. 29. Out of all your gifts ye shall offer every heave-offering of the LORD, of all the best thereof, *even* the hallowed part thereof, out of it. 30. Therefore thou shalt say unto them, When ye have heaved the best thereof from it, then it shall be counted unto the Levites, as the increase of the threshing-floor, and as the increase of the wine-press. 31. And ye shall eat it in every place, ye and your households: for it is your reward for your service, in the tabernacle of the congregation. 32. And ye shall bear no sin, by reason of it, when ye have heaved from it the best of it: neither shall ye pollute the holy things of the children of Israel, lest ye die.

Here is a further account of the provision that was made both for the Levites and for the priests, out of the country. 1. They must have *no inheritance in the land*; only cities to dwell in were afterwards allowed them, but no ground to occupy; *Thou shalt not have any part among them*, ver. 20. It is repeated again, ver. 23, and again, ver. 24. *Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance*, either by purchase or descent. God would have them comfortably provided for, but would not have their families over-rich, lest they should think themselves above their work, which therefore their wages supposed, and obliged them constantly to attend upon. As Israel was a peculiar people, and not to be numbred among the nations; so Levi was a peculiar tribe, and not to be settled as the rest of the tribes, but in all respects distinguished from them. A good reason is given, why they must have *no inheritance in the land*, for, *saith God, I am thy part, and*

thine inheritance. Note, Those that have God for their inheritance, and their portion for ever, ought to look with a holy contentment and indifferency upon the inheritances of this world, and not covet their portion in it. *The Lord is my portion, therefore will I hope in him,* and not depend upon any thing I have on this earth, *Lam. iii. 24.* The Levites shall have no inheritance, and yet they shall live very comfortably and plentifully, to teach us that providence has various ways of supporting those that live in a dependence upon it; the fowls reap not, and yet are fed, the lilies spin not, and yet are clothed; the Levites have no inheritance in Israel, and yet live better than any other tribe. The repetition of that caution, that *no Israelite should approach the tabernacle*, comes in somewhat abruptly, *ver. 22.* it seems set in opposition to that order concerning the priests and Levites, that they should have *no inheritance in Israel*; to shew how God dispenseth his favours variously. The Levites have the honour of attending the tabernacle, which is denied the Israelites; but then the Israelites have the honour of inheritances in Canaan, which is denied the Levites: thus each is kept from either envying or despising the other, and both have reason to rejoice in their lot. The Israelites must not come nigh the tabernacle, but then the Levites must have *no inheritance in the land*; if ministers expect that people should keep in their sphere, and not intermeddle with sacred offices; let them keep in theirs, and not entangle themselves in secular affairs. 2. But they must both have tithes of the land. Besides the first-fruits which were appropriated to the priests, which the Jews say were to be a fiftieth part, or at least a sixtieth, the tithe also was appropriated. 1. The Levites had the tithes of the peoples increase, *ver. 21.* *I have given* (whose the whole is) *all the tenths in Israel*, of all the products of the land, to the children of Levi, to be divided among them in just proportions, *for their service which they serve.* The Levites were the smallest tribe of the twelve, and yet, besides all other advantages, they had a tenth part of the yearly profits, without the trouble and expence of plowing and sowing; such care did God take of those that were devoted to his service; not only that they might be well maintained, but that they might be honoured with a national acknowledgment of the good services they did to the publick; and owned as God's agents and receivers; for what was a heave-offering, or an offering lifted heaven-ward unto the Lord, was by him consigned to the Levites. 2. The priests had the tenths of the Levites tithes settled upon them. The order for this Moses is directed to give to the Levites, whom God would have to pay it with cheerfulness, rather than the priests to demand it with authority. Speak to the Levites, that it be offered by them, rather than levied upon them. Now observe, 1. The Levites were to give God his dues out of their tithes, as well as the Israelites out of their increase. They were God's tenants, and rent was expected from them, nor were they exempted by their office. Thus, now ministers must be charitable out of what they receive; and the more freely they have received, the more freely they must give, and be examples of liberality, *ver. 26.* *Ye shall offer a heave-offering to the Lord.* Those that are employed to assist the devotions of others, must be sure to pay their own, as a heave-offering to the Lord. Prayers and praises lifted up to God, or rather, the heart lifted up in them, are now our heave-offerings. This (saith God) shall be reckoned to you, as though it were the corn of the threshing-floor, i. e. though it was not the fruit of their own ground, nor of their own labour, as the tithes of other Israelites were, yet being of such as they had, it should be accepted, to the sanctifying of all the rest. 2. This was to be given to Aaron the priest, *ver. 28.* and to his successors the high priests, to be divided and disposed of in such proportions, as they should think fit, among the inferior priests. Most of the profits of the priests office, which were appointed in the former part of the chapter, arising from the sacrifices, those priests had the benefit of them who constantly attended at the altar; but forasmuch as there were many priests employed in the country, to teach and rule, those tithes taken of the Levites, it is probable, were directed by the high priest for their maintenance. It is the probable conjecture of the learned bishop Patrick, that the tenth of this last tenth was reserved for the high priest himself, to support his state and dignity; for otherwise we read not of any peculiar provision made for him. 3. When the Levites had thus paid the tenth of their income, as a heave-offering to the Lord, they had themselves the comfortable enjoyment of the other nine parts, *ver. 30.* when ye have thus *heaved the best from it* (for still God's part must be the best) then ye shall eat the rest, not as a holy thing, but with the same freedom that the other Israelites eat their part, *in every place, ye and your households*, *ver. 31.* See here what is the way to have the comfort of all our worldly possessions, so as to bear no sin by reason of them, as it follows, *ver. 32.* 1. We must be sure that what we have be got honestly, and in the service of God. It is *your reward for your service*: that meat is best eaten, that is first earned; but if any *will not work, neither shall he eat*, 2 Thess. iii. 10. And that seems to be spoken of, as having a particular comfort and satisfaction in it, which is the reward of faithful service done in the tabernacle of the congregation. 2. We must be sure that God hath his dues out of it. Then we have the comfort of our substance, when we have honoured the Lord with it. Then ye shall bear no sin by reason of it, when ye have heaved the best

from it. This intimates, that we must never feed our selves without fear, lest our table become a snare, and we bear sin by reason of it; and that therefore we are concerned to give alms of such things as we have, that all may be clean and comfortable to us.

C H A P. XIX.

This chapter is only concerning the preparing and using of the ashes which were to impregnate the water of purification. The people had complained of the strictness of the law, which forbid their near approach to the tabernacle, chap. xvii. 13. In answer to which complaint they are here directed to purify themselves, so as that they might come as far as they had occasion without fear. Here is, 1. The method of preparing these ashes, by the burning of a red heifer, with a great deal of ceremony, *ver. 1—10.* 2. The way of using them. 1. They were designed to purify persons from the pollution contracted by a dead body, *ver. 11—16.* 2. They were to be put into running water (a small quantity of them) with which the person to be cleansed must be purified, *ver. 17—22.* And that this ceremonial purification was a type and figure of the cleansing of the consciences of believers from the pollutions of sin, appears by the apostle's discourse, Heb. ix. 13, 14. where he compares the efficacy of the blood of Christ, with the sanctifying virtue that was in the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron, saying, 2. This is the ordinance of the law, which the LORD hath commanded, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring thee a red heifer without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke. 3. And ye shall give her unto Eleazar the priest, that he may bring her forth without the camp, and one shall slay her before his face. 4. And Eleazar the priest shall take of her blood with his finger, and sprinkle of her blood directly before the tabernacle of the congregation seven times. 5. And one shall burn the heifer in his sight; her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung shall he burn. 6. And the priest shall take cedar-wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer. 7. Then the priest shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp, and the priest shall be unclean until the even. 8. And he that burneth her, shall wash his clothes in water, and bathe his flesh in water, and shall be unclean until the even. 9. And a man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up without the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel, for a water of separation: it is a purification for sin. 10. And he that gathereth the ashes of the heifer, shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even: and it shall be unto the children of Israel, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among them, for a statute for ever.

We have here the divine appointment concerning the solemn burning of a red heifer to ashes, and the preserving of the ashes, that of them might be made not a beautifying, but a purifying water, for that was the utmost the law reached to; it offered not to adorn as the gospel doth, but to cleanse only. This burning of the heifer, though it was not properly a sacrifice of expiation, being not performed at the altar, yet was typical of the death and sufferings of Christ; by which he intended not only to satisfy God's justice, but to purify and pacify our consciences, that we may have not only peace with God, but peace in our own bosoms: to prepare for which, Christ died not only like the bulls and goats at the altar, but like the heifer without the camp.

1. There was a great deal of curiosity in the choice of the heifer that was to be burned, much more than in the choice of any other offering, *ver. 29.* It must not only be without blemish, typifying the spotless purity, and sinless perfection of the Lord Jesus, but it must be a red heifer, because of the rarity of the colour, that it might be the more remarkable; the Jews say, if but two hairs were black or white, it was unlawful. Christ, as man, was the son of Adam, red earth, and we find him red in his apparel, red with his own blood, and red with the blood of his enemies. And it must be one on which never came yoke, which was not insisted on in other sacrifices; but thus was typified the freedom of the Lord Jesus, when he said, *Lo, I come.* He was bound and held with no other cords, but those of his own love. This heifer was to be provided at the expence of the congregation, because they were all to have a joint interest in it; and so all believers have in Christ. 2. There was to be a great deal of ceremony in the burning of it. The care of doing it was committed to Eleazar, not to Aaron himself, because it was not fit he should do any thing to render himself ceremonially unclean, no, not so much as till the even, *ver. 8.* yet it being an affair of great concern, especially in the significancy of it, it was to be performed by him that was next to Aaron in dignity. The chief priests of that

time had the principal hand in the death of Christ. Now, 1. The heifer was to be slain without the camp, as an impure thing, which speaks the insufficiency of the methods prescribed by the ceremonial law to take away sin; so far were they from cleansing effectually, that they were themselves unclean; as if the pollution that was laid upon them, continued to cleave to them. Yet to answer this type, our Lord Jesus, being made sin and a curse for us, *suffered without the gate*, Heb. xiii. 11. 2. Eleazar was to *sprinkle the blood directly before the door of the tabernacle*, and looking stedfastly towards it, ver. 4. This made it in some sort an expiation; for the sprinkling of the blood before the Lord was the chief solemnity in all the sacrifices of atonement; therefore though this was not done at the altar, yet being done towards the sanctuary, it was intimated, that the virtue and validity of it depended upon the sanctuary, and was derived from it. This signified that the satisfaction that was made to God by the death of Christ, our great high priest, who, *by the eternal Spirit*, (and the Spirit is called the finger of God, as Ainsworth observes, *Luke xi. 20.*) *offered himself without spot unto God*; he did as it were sprinkle his own blood directly before the sanctuary, when he said, *Father, into thy hands I commit my Spirit*. And this also signifies, how necessary it was to the purifying of our hearts, that satisfaction should be made to divine justice. This sprinkling of the blood put virtue into the ashes. The heifer was to be *wholly burnt*, ver. 5. This typified the extreme sufferings of our Lord Jesus, both in soul and body, as a sacrifice made by fire. The priest was to cast into the fire, while it was burning, cedar-wood, hyssop, and scarlet, which were used in the cleansing of lepers, *Lev. xiv. 6, 7.* that the ashes of these might be mingled with the ashes of the heifer, because they were designed for purification. 4. The ashes of the heifer (separated as well as they could from the ashes of the wood, wherewith it was burnt) were to be carefully gathered up by the hand of a clean person, and (as the Jews say) pounded and sifted, and so laid up for the use of the congregation, as there was occasion, ver. 9. not only for that generation, but for posterity; for the ashes of this one heifer were sufficient to season as many vessels of water, as the people of Israel would need for many ages. The Jews say, this one served till the captivity, near a thousand years, and that there was never another heifer burned till Ezra's time, after their return; to which tradition of theirs, grounded (I suppose) only upon the silence of their old records, I see no reason we have to give credit, since in the later times of their church, which they had more full records of, they find eight burned between Ezra's time and the destruction of the second temple, which was but about five hundred years. These ashes are said to be laid up here as a purification for sin, because though they were intended only to purify from ceremonial uncleanness, yet they were a type of that purification for sin, which our Lord Jesus made by his death. Ashes mixed with water are used in scouring, but these had their virtue purely from the divine institution, and their accomplishment and perfection in Christ, who is the *end of this law for righteousness*. Now observe, (1.) That the water of purification was made so by the ashes of a heifer, whose blood was sprinkled before the sanctuary; so that which cleanseth our consciences, is the remaining virtue of the death of Christ; it is his blood that *cleanseth from all sin*, 1 John i. 7. (2.) That the ashes were sufficient for all the people; there needed not to be a fresh heifer slain for every person or family that had occasion to be purified, but this one was enough for all, even for the strangers that *sojourned among them*, ver. 10. so there is virtue enough in the blood of Christ for all that repent, and believe the gospel, for every Israelite; and not for their sins only, but for the *sins of the whole world*, 1 John ii. 2. (3.) That these ashes were capable of being preserved without waste to many ages. No bodily substance is so incorruptible as ashes are, which (saith bishop Patrick) made these a very fit emblem of the everlasting efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ. He is able to save, and in order to that, able to cleanse to the uttermost, both of persons and times. These ashes were laid up as a stock or treasure, for the constant purification of Israel from their pollutions; so the blood of Christ is laid up for us in the word and sacraments, as an inexhaustible fountain of merit, to which by faith we may have recourse daily, for the purging of our consciences; see *Zech. xiii. 1.* 5. All those that were employed in this service were made ceremonially unclean by it; even Eleazar himself, though he did but sprinkle the blood, ver. 7. He that *burned the heifer was unclean*, ver. 8. and he that *gathered up the ashes*, ver. 10. so all that had a hand in putting Christ to death, contracted guilt by it; his betrayer, his prosecutors, his judge, his executioner, all did what they did with wicked hands, though it was *by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*, Acts ii. 23. yet some of them were, and all might have been, cleansed by the virtue of that same blood, which they had brought themselves under the guilt of. Some make this to signify the imperfection of the legal services, and their insufficiency to take away sin; inasmuch as those who prepared for the purifying of others, were themselves polluted by the preparation. The Jews say, this is a mystery which Solomon himself did not understand, that the same thing should pollute those that were clean, and yet purify those that were unclean. But (saith bishop Patrick) it is not strange to those who consider that all the sacrifices which were of-

fered for sin, were therefore looked upon as impure, because the sins of men were laid upon them, as all our sins were upon Christ, who therefore is said to be *made sin for us*, 2 Cor. v. 21.

11. ¶ He that toucheth the dead body of any man, shall be unclean seven days. 12. He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean: but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean. 13. Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is yet upon him. 14. This is the law, when a man dieth in a tent; all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days. 15. And every open vessel which hath no covering bound upon it, is unclean. 16. And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days. 17. And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel: 18. And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave: 19. And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even. 20. But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation: because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the LORD, the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him, he is unclean. 21. And it shall be a perpetual statute unto them, that he that sprinkleth the water of separation, shall wash his clothes, and he that toucheth the water of separation, shall be unclean until even. 22. And whatsoever the unclean person toucheth, shall be unclean: and the soul that toucheth it, shall be unclean until even.

Directions are here given concerning the use and application of the ashes, which were prepared for purification. They were laid up to be laid out; and therefore though now one place would serve to keep them in, while all Israel lay so closely encamped, yet it is probable, afterwards when they came to Canaan, some of these ashes were kept in every town, for there would be daily use of them.

Observe, 1. In what cases there needed a purification with these ashes. No other is mentioned here but the ceremonial uncleanness that was contracted by the *touch of a dead body*, or of the bone or grave of a dead man, or being in the tent or house where a dead body lay, ver. 11, 14, 15, 16. This I look upon to be one of the greatest burthens of the ceremonial law, and one of the most unaccountable. He that touched the carcass of an unclean beast, or any living man under the greatest ceremonial uncleanness, was made unclean by it, only *till the even*, and needed only common water to purify himself with; but he that came near the dead body of man, woman, or child, must bear the reproach of his uncleanness seven days, must twice be purified with the water of separation, which he could not obtain without trouble and charge, and till he is purified must not come near the sanctuary upon pain of death. This was strange, considering, (1.) That whenever any body died, (and we are in deaths oft) several persons must unavoidably contract this pollution, the body must be stripped, washed, wound up, carried out and buried, and this could not be done without many hands, and yet all defiled; which signifies that in our corrupt and fallen state, *there is none that lives and sins not*; we cannot avoid being polluted by the defiling world we pass through, and we offend daily, yet the impossibility of our being sinless, doth not make sin the less polluting. (2.) That taking care of the dead to see them decently buried, is not only necessary, but a very good office, and an act of kindness, both to the honour of the dead, and the comfort of the living, and yet uncleanness was contracted by it; which intimates, that the pollutions of sin mix with and cleave to our best services. *There is not a just man upon earth that doth good and sinneth not*, we are apt some way or other to mix it even in our doing good. (3.) That this pollution was contracted by what was done privately in their own houses, which intimates, (as bishop Patrick observes) that God sees what is done in secret, and nothing can be concealed from the divine Majesty. (4.) This pollution might be contracted, and yet a man might never know it, as by the touch of a grave which appeared not, of which our Saviour saith, *They that walk* *over it*

it are not aware of it, Luke xi. 44. which intimates the defilement of the conscience by sins of ignorance, the cause we have to cry out, Who can understand his errors? and to pray, cleanse us from secret faults, faults which we our selves do not see our selves guilty of.

But why did the law make a dead corps such a defiling thing?

1. Because death is the wages of sin, entered into the world by it, and reigns by the power of it. Death to mankind is another thing from what it is to other creatures, it is a curse, it is the execution of the law, and therefore the defilement of death signifies the defilement of sin. 2. Because the law could not conquer death, nor abolish it and alter the property of it, as the gospel doth by bringing life and immortality to light, and so introducing a better hope. Since our Redeemer was dead and buried, death is no more destroying to the Israel of God, and therefore dead bodies are no more defiling; but while the church was under the law, to shew that it made not the comers thereunto perfect, the pollution contracted by dead bodies, could not but form in their minds melancholy and uncomfortable notions concerning death, whilst believers now through Christ can triumph over it. O grave, where is thy victory! Where is thy pollution! 2. How the ashes were to be used, and applied in these cases. 1. A small quantity of the ashes must be put into a cup of spring water, and mixed with the water, which thereby was made as it is here called a water of separation, because it was to be sprinkled on those who were separated or removed from the sanctuary by their uncleanness. As the ashes of the heifer signified the merit of Christ, so the running water signified the power and grace of the blessed Spirit, who is compared to rivers of living water; and it is by his operation that the righteousness of Christ is applied to us for our cleansing: Hence we are said to be washed, that is, sanctified and justified, not only in the name of the Lord Jesus, but by the Spirit of our God, 1 Cor. vi. 11. 1 Pet. i. 2. Those that promise themselves benefit by the righteousness of Christ, while they submit not to the grace and influence of the Spirit, do but deceive themselves, for we cannot put asunder what God has joined, nor be purified by the ashes otherwise than in the running water. 2. This water must be applied by a bunch of hyssop dipt in it, with which the person or thing to be cleansed must be sprinkled, ver. 18. in allusion to which David prays, *purge me with hyssop*. Faith is as the bunch of hyssop wherewith the conscience is sprinkled, and the heart purified. Many might be sprinkled at once, and the water with which the ashes were mingled might serve for many sprinklings, till it was all spent; and a very little lighting upon a man served to purify him, if done with that intention. In allusion to this application of the water of separation by sprinkling, the blood of Christ is said to be the blood of sprinkling, Heb. xii. 24. and with it we are said to be sprinkled from an evil conscience, Heb. x. 22. i. e. we are freed from the uneasiness that ariseth from a sense of our guilt. And it is foretold, that Christ by his baptism shall sprinkle many nations, Isa. lii. 15. 3. The unclean person must be sprinkled with this water on the third day after his pollution, and on the seventh day, ver. 12—19. The days were reckoned (we may suppose) from the last time of his touching or coming near the dead body; for he would not begin the days of his cleansing, while he was still under a necessity of repeating the pollution; but when the dead body was buried, so that there was no further occasion of meddling with it, then he began to reckon his days. Then and then only we may with comfort apply Christ's merit to our souls, when we have forsaken sin, and cease all fellowship with the unfruitful works of death and darkness. The repetition of the sprinkling, teacheth us often to renew the actings of repentance and faith; wash, as Naaman, seven times; we need to do that often, which it is so necessary should be well done. 4. Though the pollution contracted was only ceremonial, yet the neglect of the purification prescribed, would turn into a moral guilt; *He that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off*, ver. 20. Note, It is a dangerous thing to contemn divine institutions, though they may seem minute. A light wound if neglected may prove fatal; a sin we call little, if not repented of, will be our ruin, when great sinners that repent shall find mercy. Our uncleanness separates us from God, but it is our being unclean, and not purifying our selves, that will separate us for ever from him; it is not the wound that is fatal, so much as the contempt of the remedy. 5. Even he that sprinkled the water of separation, or touched it, or touched the unclean person, must be unclean till the even, i. e. must not come near the sanctuary of that day, ver. 21, 22. Thus God would shew them the imperfection of those services, and their insufficiency to purify the conscience, that they might look for the Messiah, who in the fulness of time should by the eternal Spirit offer himself without spot unto God, and so purge our consciences from dead works, (i. e. from sin, which defiles like a dead body, and is therefore called a body of death) that we may have liberty of access to the sanctuary, to serve the living God, with living sacrifices.

CHAP. XX.

At this chapter begins the history of the fortieth year (which was the last) of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness. And since the beginning of their second year, when they were sentenced to make their quarantine in the desert, there to wear away the tedious revolutions of forty years, there is little recorded concerning them till this last year, which brought them to the borders of Canaan, and the history of this year is almost as large as the history of the first year. This chapter is, 1. Concerning the death of Miriam, ver. 1. 2. The fetching of water out of the rock. In which observe, (1.) The distress Israel was in for want of water, ver. 2. (2.) Their discontent and murmuring in that distress, ver. 3, 4, 5. (3.) God's pity and power engaged for their supply with water out of the rock; ver. 6, 7, 8, 9, 11. (4.) The infirmity of Moses and Aaron upon this occasion, ver. 11. (5.) God's displeasure against them, ver. 12, 13. 3. His treaty with the Edomites. Israel's request, ver. 14—17. and the repulse the Edomites gave them, ver. 18—21. 4. The death of Aaron the high-priest upon mount Hor, the installment of Eleazar in his room, and the people's mourning for him, ver. 22—29.

1. **T**HEN came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin, in the first month: and the people abode in Kadesh; and Miriam died there, and was buried there. 2. And there was no water for the congregation: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. 3. And the people chode with Moses, and spake, saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the LORD. 4. And why have ye brought up the congregation of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there? 5. And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us into this evil place? it is no place of seed, or of figs, or vines, or of pomegranates, neither is there any water to drink. 6. And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto them. 7. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 8. Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes, and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation, and their beasts drink. 9. And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him. 10. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? 11. And Moses lift up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. 12. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel; therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them. 13. This is the water of Meribah, because the children of Israel strove with the LORD: and he was sanctified in them.

After eight and thirty years tedious marches, or rather tedious rests in the wilderness, backwards towards the Red sea, the armies of Israel now at length set their faces towards Canaan again; and are come not far off from the place where they were; when, by the righteous sentence of divine justice, they were made to begin their wanderings. Hitherto they had been led about as in a maze or labyrinth, while execution was in doing upon the rebels that were sentenced; but they were now brought into the right way again; they abode in Kadesh, ver. 1. not Kadesh-barnea, which was near the borders of Canaan, but another Kadesh on the confines of Edom, further off from the land of promise, yet in the way to it from the Red sea, to which they had been hurried back.

Now, 1. Here Miriam dies; the sister of Moses and Aaron; and as it should seem elder than either of them. She must be so if she was that sister that was set to watch Moses, when he was put into the ark of bulrushes, Exod. ii. 4. Ver. 1. *Miriam died there*. She was a prophetess, had been an instrument of much good to Israel, Mic. vi. 4. When Moses and Aaron with their rod went before them to work wonders for them; Miriam with her timbrel went before them in praising God for these wondrous works, Exod. xv. 20. And therein did them real service, yet she had once been a murmurer, Numb. xii. 1. and

and must not enter Canaan. 2. Here there is another Meribah; one place we meet with before of that name, in the beginning of their march through the wilderness, which was so called, *because of the chiding of the children of Israel*, *Exod. xvii. 7.* And now we have another place, at the latter end of their march, which bears the same name, and for the same reason; *this is the water of Meribah*, *ver. 13.* What was there done was here re-acted. 1. *There was no water for the congregation*, *ver. 2.* The water out of the rock of Rephidim had followed them while there was need of it; but it is probable, that for some time, they had been in a country where they were supplied in an ordinary way, and when common providence supplied them, it was fit the miracle should cease; but in this place it fell out that there was no water, or not sufficient for the congregation. Note, We live in a wanting world, and wherever we are, must expect to meet with some inconvenience or other. It is a great mercy to have plenty of water, a mercy which if we found the want of we should own the worth of. 2. Here-upon they murmured; mutinied, *ver. 2. Gathered themselves together*, and took up arms *against Moses and Aaron*. They chid with them, *ver. 3.* spoke the same absurd and brutish language that their fathers had done before them; (1.) They wished they had died as malefactors by the hands of divine justice, rather than thus seem for a while neglected by the divine mercy. *Would God we had died when our brethren died before the Lord.* Instead of giving God thanks as they ought to have done; for sparing them, they not only despise the mercy of their reprieve, but quarrel with it, as if God had done them a great deal of wrong, in giving them their lives for a prey, and snatching them as brands out of the burning. But they need not wish they had died with their brethren, they are here taking the ready way to die like their brethren in a little while. *Wo unto them that desire the day of the Lord*, *Amos v. 18.* (2.) They are angry that they were brought out of Egypt, and led through *this wilderness*, *ver. 4, 5.* They quarrel with Moses for that which they knew was the Lord's doing; they represent that as an injury, which was the greatest favour that ever was done to any people. They prefer slavery before liberty; the house of bondage before the land of promise; and though the present want was of water only, yet now they are disposed to find fault, it shall be looked upon as an insufferable hardship put upon them that they have not vines and figs. It was an aggravation of their crime, (1.) That they had smarted so long for the discontents and distrusts of their fathers. They had *born their whoredoms* now almost *forty years in the wilderness*, *chap. xiv. 33.* And yet they venture in the same steps, and, as is charged upon Belshazzar, *humble not their hearts though they knew all this*, *Dan. v. 22.* (2.) That they had had such long and constant experience of God's goodness to them, and of the tenderness and faithfulness of Moses and Aaron. (3.) That Miriam was now newly dead; and having lost one of their leaders, they ought to have been more respectful to those that were left; but as if they were resolved to provoke God to leave them as sheep without any shepherd, they grow outrageous against them. Instead of condoling with Moses and Aaron for the death of their sister, they add affliction to their grief. 3. Moses and Aaron made them no reply, but retired to the door of the tabernacle to know God's mind in this case, *ver. 6.* There they fell on their faces, as formerly on the like occasion, to deprecate the wrath of God, and to intreat direction from him. Here is no mention of any thing they said, they knew God heard the murmurings of the people, and before him they humbly prostrate themselves, making intercession with *groanings that cannot be uttered*. There they lay waiting for orders. *Speak, Lord, for thy servants hear.* 4. God appeared to determine the matter; not on his tribunal of justice, to sentence the rebels according to their deserts, no, he *will not return to destroy Ephraim*, *will not always chide*, see *Gen. viii. 21.* But he appeared, (1.) On his throne of glory to silence their unjust murmuring, *ver. 6.* The glory of the Lord appeared, to still the tumult of the people, by striking an awe upon them. Note, A believing sight of the glory of the Lord would be an effectual check to our lusts and passions, and would keep our mouths as with a bridle. (2.) On his throne of grace to satisfy their just desires. It was requisite they should have water, and therefore though the manner of their petitioning for it was irregular, and disorderly, yet God did not take that advantage against them to deny it them, but gave immediate orders for their supply, *ver. 8.* Moses must a second time in God's name command water out of a rock for them, to shew that God is as able as ever to supply his people with good things, even in their greatest straits, and the utmost failure of second causes. Almighty power can bring water out of a rock, has done it, and can again, for his arm is not shortened. Lest it should be thought that there was something peculiar in the former rock itself, some secret spring which nature hid before in it, God here bids him broach another, and doth not as then direct him which he must apply to, but let him make use of which he pleased, or the first he came to; all alike to omnipotence. (1.) God bids him take the rod, that famous rod with which he had summoned the plagues of Egypt, and divided the sea, that having that in his hand, both he

and the people might be minded of the great things God had formerly done for them, and might be encouraged to trust in him now. This rod, it seems, was kept in the tabernacle, *ver. 9.* for it was the *rod of God*, the *rod of his strength*, as the gospel is called, *Psal. cx. 2.* perhaps in allusion to it. (2.) God bids him gather the assembly, not the elders only but the people, to be witnesses of what was done, that by their own eyes they might be convinced and made ashamed of their unbelief. There is no fallacy in God's works of wonder, and therefore they shun not the light, nor the inspection and enquiry of many witnesses. (3.) He bids him speak to the rock, which would do as it was bidden, to shame the people who had been so often spoken to, and would not hear, or obey. Their hearts were harder than this rock, not so tender, not so yielding, not so obedient. (4.) He promiseth that the rock should give forth water, *ver. 8.* and it did so, *ver. 11. The water came out abundantly.* This is an instance not only of the power of God, that he could thus fetch honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock, but of his mercy and grace, that he would do it for such a provoking people. This was upon the matter a new generation, most of the old stock were by this time worn off, yet they were as bad as those that went before them; murmuring ran in the blood, yet the entail of the divine favour was not cut off; but in this instance of it, the divine patience shines as bright as the divine favour. He is as God and not man, in sparing and pardoning; nay, he not only here gave them the drink which they drank of, in common with their beasts, *ver. 8—11.* but in it he made them to drink spiritual drink, which typified spiritual blessings, for that rock was Christ. (5.) Moses and Aaron missed it in the management of this matter, and missed it so much, that God in displeasure told them immediately they should not have the honour of bringing Israel into Canaan, *ver. 10, 11, 12.* This is a strange passage of story, yet very instructive.

1. It is certain that God was greatly offended, and justly, for he is never angry without cause. Though they were his servants, and had obtained mercy to be faithful, though they were his favourites, and such as he had highly honoured, yet for something they thought or said, or did upon this occasion, he put them under the disgrace and mortification of dying as other unbelieving Israelites did, short of Canaan. And, no doubt, the crime deserved the punishment. 2. Yet it is uncertain what it was in this management that was so provoking to God, the fault was complicated. 1. They did not punctually observe their orders, but in some things varied from their commission; God bid them speak to the rock, and they spake to the people, and smote the rock, which at this time they were not ordered to do, but they thought speaking would not do. When, in distrust of the power of the word, we have recourse to the secular power in matters of pure conscience, we do, as Moses here, smite the rock we should only speak to. 2. They assumed too much of the glory of this work of wonder to themselves; *Must we fetch water?* as if it were done by some power or worthiness of theirs. Therefore it is charged upon them, *ver. 12. that they did not sanctify God*, i.e. they did not give him that glory of this miracle which was due unto his name. 3. Unbelief was the great transgression, *ver. 12. Ye believed me not*, nay, it is called *rebellious against God's commandment*, *Numb. xxvii. 14.* The command was to bring water out of the rock, but they rebelled against this command by distrusting it, and doubting whether it would take effect or no. They speak doubtfully, *Must we fetch water?* And probably, they did some other ways discover an uncertainty in their own minds, whether water would come or no, for such a rebellious generation as this was. And perhaps they rather questioned it, though God had promised it, because the glory of the Lord did not appear before them upon this rock, as it had done upon the rock in Rephidim, *Exod. xvii. 6.* They would not take God's word without a sign. Dr. Lightfoot's notion of their unbelief is, that they doubted whether now at last when the forty years were expired they should enter Canaan, and whether they must not for the murmurings of the people be condemned to another like fatigue, because a new rock was now opened for their supply, which they took for an indication of their longer stay. And if so, justly were they kept out of Canaan themselves, while the people entered at the time appointed. 4. They said and did all in heat and passion; this is the account given of the sin, *Psal. cvi. 23. They provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.* It was in his passion that he called them rebels; it is true they were so, God had called them so, and Moses afterwards, in the way of a just reproof, *Deut. ix. 24.* calls them so without offence, but now it came from a provoked spirit, and was spoken unadvisedly; it was too like *Racq*, and then *Fool*. His smiting of the rock twice, (it should seem not waiting at all for the eruption of the water upon the first stroke) speaks him in a heat. The same thing said and done with meekness may be justifiable, which when said and done in anger may be highly culpable, see *Jam. i. 20.* 5. That which aggravated all the rest, and made it the more provoking, was, that it was publick, before the eyes of the children of Israel, to whom they should have been examples of faith, and hope, and meekness. We find Moses guilty of a sin

ful distrust, *Numb. xi. 22, 23.* That was private between God and him, and therefore was only checked, but this was publick, it dishonoured God before Israel, as if he grudged them his favours, and discouraged the peoples hope in God, and therefore this was severely punished, and the more because of the dignity and eminency of them that offended.

From the whole we may learn, 1. That the best of men have their failings, even in those graces that they are most eminent for. The man Moses was very meek, and yet here he sinned in passion; wherefore *let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall.* 2. That God judgeth not as man judgeth concerning sins; we would think there was not much amiss in what Moses said and did, yet God saw cause to animadvert severely upon it. He knows the frame of mens spirits, what temper they are of, and what temper they are in, upon particular occasions; and from what thoughts and intents, words and actions do proceed; and we are sure that therefore *his judgment is according to truth*, when it agrees not with ours. 3. That God not only takes notice of, and is displeased with the sins of his people, but the nearer any are to him, the more offensive are their sins, *Amos iii. 2.* It should seem the Psalmist refers to this sin of Moses and Aaron, *Psal. xcix. 8. Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance on their inventions.* As many are spared in this life, and punished in the other, so many are punished in this life, and spared in the other. 4. That when our heart is hot within us, we are concerned to take heed that we offend not with our tongue. Yet, 5. It is an evidence of the sincerity of Moses, and his impartiality in writing, that he himself left this upon record concerning himself, and drew not a veil over his own infirmity; by which it appeared, that in what he wrote, as well as in what he did, he sought God's glory more than his own.

Lastly, The place is hereupon called Meribah, *ver. 12.* It is called Meribah-Kadesh, *Deut. xxxii. 51.* to distinguish it from the other Meribah. It is the *water of strife*; to perpetuate the remembrance of the peoples sin, and Moses's, and yet of God's mercy, who supplied them with water, and owned and honoured Moses notwithstanding. Thus he was sanctified in them, as the *holy One of Israel*, so he is called when his mercy rejoiceth against judgment, *Hos. xi. 9.* Moses and Aaron did not sanctify God as they ought in the eyes of Israel, *ver. 12.* but God was sanctified in them; for he will not be a loser in his honour by any man. If he be not glorified by us, he will be glorified upon us.

14. And Moses sent messengers from Kadesh, unto the king of Edom, Thus saith thy brother Israel, Thou knowest all the travel that hath befallen us: 15. How our fathers went down into Egypt, and we have dwelt in Egypt a long time: and the Egyptians vexed us, and our fathers. 16. And when we cried unto the LORD, he heard our voice, and sent an angel, and hath brought us forth out of Egypt: and behold, we are in Kadesh, a city in the uttermost of thy border. 17. Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country: we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells: we will go by the kings highway, we will not turn to the right hand nor to the left, until we have passed thy borders. 18. And Edom said unto them, Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword. 19. And the children of Israel said unto him, We will go by the highway: and if I and my cattle drink of thy water, then I will pay for it: I will only (without *doing* any thing *else*) go through on my feet. 20. And he said, Thou shalt not go through. And Edom came out against him with much people, and with a strong hand. 21. Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border: wherefore Israel turned away from him.

We have here the treaty between Israel and the Edomites; the next way to Canaan from the place where Israel now lay encamped, was through the country of Edom. Now, 1. Moses sends ambassadors to treat with the king of Edom for leave to pass through his country, and gives them instructions what to say, *ver. 14—17.* (1.) They are to claim kindred with the Edomites. *Thus saith thy brother Israel.* Both nations descended from Abraham and Isaac, their common ancestors, Esau and Jacob, the two fathers of their several nations, were twin-brothers; and therefore, for relation sake, they might reasonably expect this kindness from them; nor needed the Edomites to fear that their brother Israel had any ill design upon them, or would take any advantages against them. (2.) They are to give a short account of the history and present state of Israel, which, they take it for granted, the Edomites were no strangers to. And in this there was a double plea; 1. Israel had been abused by the Egyptians, and therefore ought to be pitied and succoured

by their relations; *the Egyptians vexed us and our fathers*, but we may hope our brethren the Edomites will not be so vexatious, 2. Israel had been wonderfully saved by the Lord, and therefore ought to be countenanced and favoured, *ver. 16. We cried unto the Lord, and he sent an angel*, the angel of his presence, the angel of the covenant, the eternal Word, who has *brought us forth out of Egypt*, and led us hither. It was therefore the interest of the Edomites, to ingratiate themselves with a people that had so great an interest in heaven, and were so much its favourites, and it was at their peril if they offered them any injury. It is our wisdom and duty to be kind to those whom God is pleased to own, and to take his people for our people. *Come in, thou blessed of the Lord.* (3.) They are humbly to beg a passport through their country. Though God himself, in the pillar of cloud and fire, was Israel's guide, in following which they might have justified their passing through any man's ground against all the world; yet God would have this respect paid to the Edomites, to shew, that no man's property ought to be invaded under colour of religion. Dominion is founded in providence, not in grace. Thus when Christ was to pass through a village of the Samaritans, to whom his coming was likely to be offensive, he *sent messengers before his face*, to ask leave, *Luke ix. 52.* Those that would receive kindness, must not disdain to request it. (4.) They are to give security for the good behaviour of the Israelites in this march; that they would keep in the king's high road, that they would commit no trespass upon any man's property, either in ground or water, that they would not so much as make use of a well, but they would pay for it, and that they would make all convenient speed, as fast as they could well go on their feet, *ver. 17, 19.* Nothing could be offered more fair, and neighbourly. 2. The ambassadors returned with a denial, *ver. 18.* Edom, that is the king of Edom, as protector of his country, said, *Thou shalt not pass by me*; and when the ambassadors urged it further, he repeated the denial, *ver. 20.* and threatened, if they offered to enter his country, it should be at their peril; he raised his trained bands to oppose them. *Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage.* This was owing, 1. To their jealousy of the Israelites, they feared they should receive damage by them, and would not trust their promises. And truly had this numerous army been under any other discipline and command but that of the righteous God himself, who would no more suffer them to do wrong, than to take wrong, there might have been cause for this jealousy; but what could they fear from a nation that had *statutes and judgments so righteous*? 2. It was owing to the old enmity, which Esau bore to Israel: If they had no reason to fear damage by them, yet they were not willing to shew so much kindness to them. Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing, and now the hatred revived, when the blessing was ready to be inherited. God would hereby discover the ill-nature of the Edomites to their shame; and try the good-nature of the Israelites to their honour, they *turned away from him*, and did not take this occasion to quarrel with him. Note, We must not think it strange, if the most reasonable requests be denied by unreasonable men; and if those be affronted by men, whom God favours. *I as a deaf man heard not.* After this indignity which the Edomites did to Israel, God gave them a particular caution, *not to abhor an Edomite*, *Deut. xxiii. 7:* though the Edomites had shewed such an abhorrence of them, to teach us in such cases not to meditate revenge.

22. ¶ And the children of Israel, even the whole congregation journeyed from Kadesh, and came unto mount Hor. 23. And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in mount Hor, by the coast of the land of Edom, saying, 24. Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah. 25. Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up unto mount Hor: 26. And strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son: and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there. 27. And Moses did as the LORD commanded: and they went up into mount Hor, in the sight of all the congregation: 28. And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there in the top of the mount: and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount. 29. And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty days, even all the house of Israel.

The chapter began with the funeral of Miriam, and it ends with the funeral of her brother Aaron: When death comes into a family it often strikes double. Israel had not improved the former affliction they were under by the death of the prophets, and therefore soon after God took away their priest, to try if they would lay that to heart. This happened at the very

next stage, when they removed to mount Hor, fetching a compass about the Edomites country, leaving it on their left hand. Wherever we go, death attends us, and the graves are ready for us.

1. God bids Aaron die, *ver. 24.* God takes Moses and Aaron aside, and tells them, *Aaron shall be gathered to his people*; these two dear brothers are told that they must part, Aaron the elder must die first, but Moses is not likely to be long after him; so that it is but for a while, a little while, that they are parted. (1.) There is something of displeasure in these orders; Aaron must not enter Canaan, because he had failed in his duty at the waters of strife. The mention of this, no doubt, went to the heart of Moses, who knew himself, perhaps at that time, more guilty of the two. (2.) There is much of mercy in them. Aaron, though he die for his transgression, is not put to death as a malefactor, by a plague, or fire from heaven, but dies with ease, and in honour. He is not cut off from his people, as the expression usually is, concerning those that die by the hand of divine justice, but he is gathered to his people, as one that died in the arms of divine grace. (3.) There is much of type, and significancy, in them. Aaron must not enter Canaan, to shew that the Levitical priesthood could make nothing perfect, that must be done by the bringing in of a better hope. Those priests could not continue by reason of sin and death, but the priesthood of Christ being undefiled, is unchangeable, and to this, which abideth for ever, Aaron must resign all his honour, *Heb. vii. 23, 24, 25.* 2. Aaron submits and dies, in the method and manner appointed, and for ought appears with as much cheerfulness as if he had been going to bed. (1.) He puts on his holy garments, to take his leave of them, and goes up with his brother and son to the top of mount Hor, and probably, some of the elders of Israel with him, *ver. 27.* They went up *in the sight of all the congregation*, who, it is likely, were told on what errand they went up; by this solemn procession Aaron lets Israel know, that he is neither afraid nor ashamed to die, but, when the bridegroom comes, can trim his lamps, and go forth to meet him. His going up the hill to die, signified, that the death of saints (and Aaron is called *the saint of the Lord*) is their ascension; they rather go up than go down to death. (2.) Moses, whose hands had first clothed Aaron with his priestly garments, now strips him of them; for in reverence to the priesthood, it was not fit he should die in them. Note, Death will strip us; naked we came into the world, and naked we must go out. We shall see little reason to be proud of our clothes, our ornaments, or marks of honour, if we consider how soon death will *strip us of our glory*, divest us of all our offices and honours, and *take the crown off from our head.* (3.) Moses immediately puts the priestly garments upon Eleazar his son, clothes him with his father's robe, and *strengthens him with his girdle*, *Isa. xxii. 21.* Now, 1. This was a great comfort to Moses, by whose hand the law of the priesthood was given, to see, that it should be kept up in a succession, and that a lamp was ordained *for the anointed*, which should not be extinguished by death itself. This was a happy earnest and indication to the church of the care God would take, that *as one generation of ministers and christian (spiritual priests) passeth away*, another generation shall come up instead of it. 2. It was a great satisfaction to Aaron; to see his son, who was dear to him, thus preferred, and his office, which was dearer, thus preserved and secured: and especially, to see in this a figure of Christ's everlasting priesthood, in which alone his would be perpetuated; now, Lord, might Aaron say, *Let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.* 3. It was a great kindness to the people. The installing of Eleazar before Aaron was dead, would prevent those, who bore ill-will to Aaron's family, from attempting to set up another upon his death, in competition with his son; What could they do when the matter was already settled? It would likewise encourage those among them that feared God, and be a token for good to them, that he would not leave them, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail. (4.) Aaron died there. Presently after he was stripped of his priestly garments, he laid him down and died contentedly; for a good man would desire, if it were the will of God, not to out-live his usefulness. Why should we covet to continue any longer in this world, than while we may do God and our generation some service in it? (5.) Moses and Eleazar, with those that attended them, buried Aaron there where he died, as appears by *Deut. x. 6.* and then *came down from the mount.* And now, when they came down, and had left Aaron behind, it might be proper for them to think, that he was rather gone up to the better world, and had left them behind. (6.) All the congregation mourned for Aaron thirty days, *ver. 29.* Though the loss was well made up in Eleazar, who being in the prime of his time, was fitter for publick service, than Aaron would have been if he had lived, yet it was a debt owing to their deceased high priest to mourn for him. While he lived they were murmuring at him upon all occasions, but now he was dead they *mourned for him.* Thus many are taught to lament the loss of those mercies, which they would not learn to be thankful for the enjoyment of. Many good men have had more honour done to their memories, than ever they had

to their persons; witness those that were persecuted while they lived, but when they were dead, had their sepulchres garnished.

C H A P. XXI.

The armies of Israel now begin to emerge out of the wilderness, and to come into a land inhabited; to enter upon action, and take possession of the frontiers of the land of promise. A glorious campaign this chapter gives us the history of, especially in the latter part of it. Here is, 1. The defeat of Arad the Canaanite, *ver. 1—3.* 2. The chastisement of the people with fiery serpents for their murmurings, and the relief granted them, upon their submission, by a brazen serpent, *ver. 4—9.* 3. Several marches forward, and some occurrences by the way, *ver. 10—20.* 4. The celebrated conquest of Sihon king of the Amorites, *ver. 21—32.* and of Og king of Bashan, *ver. 33—35.* And possession taken of their land.

1. **A**ND when king Arad the Canaanite, which dwelt in the south, heard tell that Israel came by the way of the spies, then he fought against Israel, and took some of them prisoners. 2. And Israel vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities. 3. And the LORD hearkened to the voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites: and they utterly destroyed them, and their cities, and he called the name of the place Hormah.

Here is, 1. The descent which Arad the Canaanite made upon the camp of Israel, hearing that they came *by the way of the spies*; for though the spies Moses had sent thirty years before, then passed and repassed unobserved, yet their coming, and their errand, it is likely, was afterwards known to the Canaanites, gave them an alarm, and obliged them to keep an eye upon Israel, and get intelligence of all their motions. Now when they understood they were facing about towards Canaan, this Arad thinking it policy to keep the war at a distance, made an onset upon them, and fought with them. But it proved, that he meddled to his own hurt; had he sitten still, his people might have been last destroyed of all the Canaanites, but now they were the first. Thus they that are *overmuch wicked die before their time*, *Eccles. vii. 17.* 2. His success at first in this attempt. His advance-guards picked up some straggling Israelites, and took them prisoners, *ver. 1.* This no doubt puffed him up, and he began to think, he should have the honour of crushing this formidable body, and saving his country from the ruin it threatened them. It was likewise a trial to the faith of the Israelites, and check to them for their distrusts and discontents. 3. Israel's humble address to God upon this occasion, *ver. 2.* It was a temptation to them to murmur as their fathers did, and to despair of getting possession of Canaan, but God who thus tried them by his providence, enabled them by his grace to quit themselves well in the trial, and to trust in God for relief against this fierce and powerful assailant. They, by their elders, in prayer for success, *vowed a vow.* Note, When we are desiring and expecting mercy from God, we should bind our souls with a bond that we will faithfully do our duty to him, particularly that we will honour him with the mercy we are in the pursuit of. Thus Israel here promised to destroy the cities of these Canaanites, as devoted to God, and not to take the spoil of them to their own use. If God would give them victory, he should have all the praise, and they would not make a gain of it to themselves. When we are in this frame, we are prepared to receive mercy. 4. The victory which the Israelites obtained over the Canaanites, *ver. 3.* A strong party was sent out probably under the command of Joshua, which not only drove back these Canaanites, but followed them to their cities, which probably lay on the edge of the wilderness, and utterly destroyed them, and so returned to the camp. *Vincimur in prælio, sed non in bello.* What is said of the tribe of Gad, is true of all God's Israel, a troop may overcome them, but they shall overcome at the last. The place was called Hormah, as a memorial of the destruction, for the terror of the Canaanites, and probably for warning to posterity not to attempt the rebuilding of these cities, which were destroyed as devoted to God, and sacrifices to divine justice. And it appears by the instance of Jericho, that the law concerning such cities was, that they should never be rebuilt. There seems to be an allusion to this name in the prophecy of the fall of the New Testament Babylon, *Rev. xvi. 16.* Where its forces are said to be gathered together to a place called Arma-geddon; the *destruction of a troop.*

4. ¶ And they journeyed from mount Hor, by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. 5. And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us

us up out of Egypt, to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water, and our soul lotheth this light bread. 6. And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people; and they bit the people, and much people of Israel died. 7. ¶ Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD that he take away the serpents from us: and Moses prayed for the people. 8. And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. 9. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

Here is, 1. The fatigue of Israel by a long march round the land of Edom, because they could not obtain passage through it the next way, *ver. 4.* The soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. Perhaps, the way was rough and uneven, or foul and dirty; or, it fretted them to go so far about, and that they were not permitted to force their passage through the Edomites country. Those that are of a fretful discontented spirit, will always find something or other to make them uneasy. 2. Their unbelief and murmuring upon this occasion, *ver. 5.* Though they had just now obtained a glorious victory over the Canaanites, and were going on conquering, and to conquer; yet they speak very discontentedly of what God had done for them, and distrustfully of what he would do, vexed that they were brought out of Egypt, that they had not bread and water as other people had by their own care and industry, but by miracle, they know not how. They have bread enough and to spare; and yet they complain, there is no bread, because, though they eat angels food, yet they are weary of it; manna it self is lothed, and called light bread, fit for children, not for men and soldiers. What will they be pleased with, whom manna will not please? They that are disposed to quarrel, will find fault where there is no fault to be found. Thus those who have long enjoyed the means of grace, are apt to surfeit even on the heavenly manna, and to call it light bread. But let not the contempt which some cast upon the word of God, make us to value it the less: It is the bread of life, substantial bread, and will nourish those who by faith feed upon it to life eternal, whoever calls it light bread. 3. The righteous judgment God brought upon them for their murmuring, *ver. 6.* He sent fiery serpents among them, which bit or stung many of them to death. The wilderness through which they had passed, was all along infested with these fiery serpents, as appears *Deut. viii. 15.* But hitherto God had wonderfully preserved his people from receiving hurt by them; till now that they murmured; to chastise them for which, these animals, which hitherto had shunned their camp, now invade it. Justly are those made to feel God's judgments, that are not thankful for his mercies. These serpents are called fiery, either from their colour, or from their rage, or from the effects of their bitings, enflaming the body, put it presently into a high fever, scorching it with an insatiable thirst. They had unjustly complained for want of water, *ver. 5.* To chastise them for which, God sends upon them this thirst, which no water would quench. They that cry without cause, have justly cause given them to cry out. They distrustfully concluded that they must die in the wilderness, and God took them at their word, chose their delusions, and brought their unbelieving fears upon them, many of them did die. They had impudently flown in the face of God himself, and the poison of asps was under their lips, and now these fiery serpents, which it should seem were flying serpents, *Isa. xiv. 29.* flew in their faces, and poisoned them. They in their pride had lifted up themselves against God and Moses, and now God humbled and mortified them, by making these despicable animals a plague to them. That artillery is now turned against them, which had formerly been made use of in their defence against the Egyptians: He that brought quails to feast them, let them know he could bring serpents to bite them; the whole creation is at war with those that are in arms against God. 4. Their repentance and supplication to God under this judgment, *ver. 7.* They confess their fault, we have sinned; they are particular in the confession, we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; it is to be feared, they had not owned the sin, if they had not felt the smart; but they relent under the rod; when he slew them, then they sought him. They beg the prayers of Moses for them, as conscious to themselves of their own unworthiness to be heard, and convinced of the great interest Moses had in heaven. How soon is their tune altered! They who but just before had quarrelled with him, as their worst enemy, now make their court to him as their best friend, and choose him for their advocate with God. Afflictions often change mens sentiments concerning God's people, and teach them to value those prayers which, when time was, they had scorned. Moses, to

shew that he had heartily forgiven them, blesses them who had cursed him, and prays for them who had despitefully used him. Herein he was a type of Christ, who interceded for his persecutors; and a pattern to us to go and do likewise, and thus to shew that we love our enemies. 5. The wonderful provision God made for their relief. He did not employ Moses in summoning the judgment, but that he might recommend him to the good affection of the people, he made him instrumental in their relief, *ver. 8, 9.* God ordered Moses to make the representation of a fiery serpent, which he did in brass, and set it up on a very long pole, so as that it might be seen from all parts of the camp, and every one that was stung with a fiery serpent, was healed by looking up to that serpent of brass. The people prayed, that God would take away the serpents from them, *ver. 6.* but God saw fit not to do that; for he gives effectual relief in the best way, though not in our way. Thus those who did not die for their murmuring, yet were made to smart for it, that they might the more feelingly repent and humble themselves for it; they were likewise made to receive their cure from God by the hand of Moses, that they might be taught, if possible, never again to speak against God and Moses.

This method of cure was altogether miraculous, and the more wonderful if it be true which naturalists say, that looking upon bright and burnished brass, is hurtful to those that are stung with fiery serpents. God can bring about his purposes by contrary means. The Jews themselves say, it was not the sight of the brazen serpent that cured them, but in looking up to it, they looked up to God as the Lord that healed them. But there was much of gospel in this appointment. Our Saviour has told us so, *John iii. 14, 15.* That as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so the Son of man must be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish. Observe then a resemblance, (1.) Between their disease and ours. The devil is the old serpent, a fiery serpent, hence he appears, *Rev. xii. 3.* as a great red dragon. Sin is the biting of this fiery serpent, it is painful to the startled conscience, and poisonous to the feared conscience. Satan's temptations are called his fiery darts, *Eph. vi. 16.* Lust and passion enflame the soul, so do the terrors of the Almighty, when they set themselves in array. At the last, sin bites like a serpent, and stings like an adder; and even its sweets are turned into the gall of asps. (2.) Between their remedy and ours. 1. It was God himself that devised and prescribed this antidote against the poison of the fiery serpents; so our salvation by Christ was the contrivance of infinite wisdom; God himself hath found the ransom. 2. It was a very unlikely method of cure; so our salvation by the death of Christ is to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness. It was Moses that lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so the law is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, and Moses wrote of him, *John v. 46.* Christ was lifted up by the rulers of the Jews, who were the successors of Moses. 3. That which cured was shaped in the likeness of that which wounded. So Christ, though perfectly free from sin himself, yet was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, *Rom. viii. 3.* So like, that it was taken for granted, this man was a sinner, *John ix. 24.* 4. The brazen serpent was lifted up; so was Christ: He was lifted up upon the cross, *John xii. 33, 34.* for he was made a spectacle to the world. He was lifted up by the preaching of the gospel. The word here used for a pole, signifies a banner or ensign, for Christ crucified stands for an ensign of the people, *Isa. xi. 10.* Some make the lifting up of the serpent, to be a figure of Christ's triumphing over Satan, the old serpent, whose head he bruised, and in his cross made an open shew of the principalities and powers he had spoiled and destroyed, *Col. ii. 15.* (3.) Between the application of their remedy and ours. They looked and lived, and we, if we believe, shall not perish; it is by faith that we look unto Jesus, *Heb. xii. 2.* Look unto me and be ye saved, *Isa. xlv. 22.* We must be sensible of our wound, and of our danger by it, receive the record God has given concerning his son, and rely upon the assurance he has given us, that we shall be healed and saved by him, if we resign our selves to his conduct. The brazen serpent's being lifted up would not cure, if it were not looked upon. If any pored on their wound, and would not look up to the brazen serpent, they died for certain. If they slighted this method of cure, and had recourse to natural medicines, and trusted to them, they justly perished; so, if sinners either despise Christ's righteousness, or despair of benefit by it, their wound will without doubt be fatal; but who ever looked up to this healing sign, though from the outmost part of the camp, though with a weak and weeping eye, was certainly healed; so whosoever believes in Christ, though as yet but weak in faith, shall not perish. There are weak brethren, for whom Christ died. Perhaps for some time after the serpent was set up, the camp of Israel was molested by the fiery serpents; and it is the probable conjecture of some, that they carried this brazen serpent along with them through the rest of their journies, and set it up wherever they encamped, and when they settled in Canaan, fixed it somewhere within the borders of their land, for it is not likely that the children of Israel went so far off as this was into the wilderness to burn incense to it, as we find they did; *2 Kings xviii. 4.* Even those that are delivered from

from the eternal death which is the wages of sin; yet must expect to feel the pain and smart of it, as long as they are here in this world, but if it be not our own fault, we may have the brazen serpent to accompany us, to be still looked up to upon all occasions, by bearing about with us continually the dying of the Lord Jesus.

10. ¶ And the children of Israel set forward, and pitched in Oboth. 11. And they journeyed from Oboth, and pitched at Ije-abarim, in the wilderness which is before Moab, toward the sun-rising. 12. ¶ From thence they removed, and pitched in the valley of Zared. 13. From thence they removed, and pitched on the other side of Arnon, which is in the wilderness that cometh out of the coasts of the Amorites: for Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites. 14. Wherefore it is said in the book of the wars of the LORD, What he did in the Red sea, and in the brooks of Arnon, 15. And at the stream of the brooks that goeth down to the dwelling of Ar, and lieth upon the border of Moab. 16. And from thence *they went* to Beer: that is the well whereof the LORD spake unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water. 17. ¶ Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well, sing ye unto it: 18. The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it by *the direction* of the law-giver, with their staves. And from the wilderness *they went* to Mattanah: 19. And from Mattanah to Nahaliel: and from Nahaliel to Bamoth: 20. And from Bamoth *in* the valley that is in the country of Moab, to the top of Pisgah, which looketh toward Jeshimon.

We have here an account of the several stages and removes of the children of Israel, till they came into the plains of Moab, out of which at length they passed over Jordan into Canaan, in the beginning of Joshua. Natural motions the nearer they come to their centre, the quicker they are. Israel was now drawing near to the promised rest. And now they set forward, as the expression is, *ver. 10.* It were well if we would do thus in our way to heaven, rid ground in the latter end of our journey, and the nearer we come to heaven, be so much the more active and abundant in the work of the Lord. Two things especially are observable in the brief account here given of these removes.

1. The wonderful success which God blessed his people with near the brooks of Arnon, *ver. 13, 14, 15.* They had now compassed the land of Edom, which they were not to invade, nor so much as to infect, *Deut. ii. 4, 5.* and were come to the border of Moab. It is well there are more ways than one to Canaan. The enemies of God's people may retard their passage, but cannot prevent their entrance into the promised rest. Care is taken to let us know, that the Israelites in their march religiously observed the orders God gave them, to use no hostility against the Moabites, *Deut. ii. 9.* because they were the posterity of righteous Lot; therefore they pitched on the other side of Arnon, *ver. 13.* that side which was now in the possession of the Amorites, one of the devoted nations, though formerly it had belonged to Moab, as appears here, *ver. 26, 27.* This care of theirs not to offer violence to the Moabites is pleaded by Jephtha long after, in his remonstrance against the Ammonites, *Judg. xi. 15,* &c. and turned to them for a testimony. What their achievements were now they pitched on the banks of the river Arnon, we are not particularly told, but are referred to the *book of the wars of the Lord*; perhaps that book which was begun with the history of the war with the Amalekites, *Exod. xvii. 14.* Write it (saith God) for a memorial in a book; to which were added all the other battles Israel fought, in order; and among the rest, the actions upon the river Arnon, at Vaheb in Suphah, as our margin reads it, and other places on that river. Or it shall be said (so some read it) *in the rehearsal*, or commemoration of the wars of the Lord, what he did in the Red sea, when he brought Israel out of Egypt, and what he did in the brooks of Arnon, just before he brought them into Canaan. Note, In celebrating the memorials of God's favours to us, it is good to observe the series of them, and how divine goodness and mercy hath constantly followed us, even from the Red sea to the brooks of Arnon. In every stage of our lives, nay in every step, we should take notice of what God has wrought for us; what he did at such a time, and what in such a place, ought to be distinctly remembered. 2. The wonderful supply which God blessed his people with at Beer, *ver. 16.* which signifies the well or fountain. It is said, *ver. 10.* they pitched in Oboth, which signifies bottles, so called perhaps because there they filled their bottles with water, which should last them for some time; but by this time, we may suppose, it was with them as it was with Hagar, *Gen. xxi. 15.* The water was spent in the bottle; yet we do not find that they murmured, and therefore God, in compassion to them, brought them to a well of water, to encourage them to wait on him in humble silence and expecta-

tion, and to believe that he would graciously take cognizance of their wants, though they did not complain of them. In this world we do at the best but pitch in Oboth, where our comforts lie in close and scanty vessels; when we come to heaven, we shall remove to Beer, the well of life, and fountain of living waters. Hitherto, we have found, when they were supplied with water, they asked it in unjust discontent, and God gave it in just displeasure: but here we find, 1. That God gave it in love, *ver. 16.* Gather the people together, to be witnesses of the wonder, and joint sharers in the favour, and I will give them water. Before they prayed, God granted, and prevented them with the blessings of goodness. 2. That they received it with joy and thankfulness, which made the mercy doubly sweet to them, *ver. 17.* Then they sang this song, to the glory of God, and the encouragement of one another, Spring up, O well; thus they pray it may spring up, for promised mercies must be fetched in by prayer; they triumph that it doth spring up, and meet it with their joyful acclamations; with joy must we draw water out of the wells of salvation, *Isa. xii. 3.* As the brazen serpent was a figure of Christ, who is lifted up for our cure, so is this well a figure of the Spirit, who is poured forth for our comfort, and from whom flow to us rivers of living water, *John vii. 38.* Doth this well spring up in our souls? We should sing to it; take the comfort to our selves, and give the glory to God; stir up this gift, sing to it, Spring up, O well, thou fountain of gardens, to water my soul, *Cant. iv. 15.* Plead the promise, which perhaps alludes to this story, *Isa. xli. 17, 18.* I will make the wilderness wells of water. 3. That whereas before the remembrance of the miracle was perpetuated in the name given to the places, which signified the people's strife and murmuring, now was perpetuated in a song of praise, which preserved on record the manner how it was done, *ver. 18.* The princes digged the well, the seventy elders, it is probable, by direction of the law-giver, i. e. Moses, under God, with their staves; that is, with their staves they made holes in the soft and sandy ground, and God caused the water miraculously to spring up in the holes they made. Thus the pious Israelites long after, passing through the valley of Baca, a dry and thirsty place, made wells, and God by rain from heaven filled the pools, *Psal. lxxxiv. 6.* Observe, (1.) God promised to give them water, but they must open the ground to receive it, and give it vent. God's favours must be expected in the use of such means as lie within our power, but still the excellency of the power is of God. 2. The nobles of Israel were forward to set their hands to this work, and used their staves, probably those that were the ensigns of their honour and power, for the publick service, and it is upon record to their honour. And we may suppose it was a great confirmation to them in their offices, and a great comfort to the people that they were made use of by the divine power, as instruments in this miraculous supply. By this it appeared that the spirit of Moses, who must shortly die, rested in some measure upon the nobles of Israel. Moses did not strike the ground himself, as formerly the rock, but gave them direction to do it, that their staves might share in the honour of his rod, and they might comfortably hope, that when he should leave them, yet God would not, but that they also in their generation should be publick blessings, and might expect the divine presence with them, as long as they acted by the direction of the law-giver. For comfort must be looked for only in the way of duty; and if we would share in divine joys, we must carefully follow the divine conduct.

21. ¶ And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, saying, 22. Let me pass through thy land; we will not turn into the fields or into the vineyards, we will not drink of the waters of the well: but we will go along by the king's high way, until we be past thy borders. 23. And Sihon would not suffer Israel to pass through his border: but Sihon gathered all his people together, and went out against Israel into the wilderness: and he came to Jahaz, and fought against Israel. 24. And Israel smote him with the edge of the sword, and possessed his land from Arnon unto Jabbok, even unto the children of Ammon: for the border of the children of Ammon was strong. 25. And Israel took all these cities: and Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites in Heshbon, and in all the villages thereof. 26. For Heshbon was the city of Sihon the king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab, and taken all his land out of his hand, even unto Arnon. 27. Wherefore they that speak in proverbs, say, Come into Heshbon, let the city of Sihon be built and prepared. 28. For there is a fire gone out of Heshbon, a flame from the city of Sihon: it hath consumed Ar of Moab, and the lords of the high places of Arnon. 29. Wo to thee, Moab; thou art undone, O people of Chemosh: he hath given his sons that escaped, and his daughters, in captivity unto Sihon king of the Amorites. 30. We have

have shot at them; Heshbon is perished even unto Dibon, and we have laid them waste even unto Nophah, which *reacheth* unto Medeba. 31. ¶ Thus Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites. 32. And Moses sent to spy out Jaazar, and they took the villages thereof, and drove out the Amorites that *were* there. 33. ¶ And they turned and went up by the way of Bashan: and Og the king of Bashan went out against them, he, and all his people to the battle at Edrei. 34. And the LORD said unto Moses, Fear him not: for I have delivered him into thy hand, and all his people, and his land; and thou shalt do to him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon. 35. So they smote him and his sons, and all his people, until there was none left him alive: and they possessed his land.

We have here an account of the victories Israel obtained over Sihon and Og, which must be distinctly considered, not only because they are here distinctly related, but because long after the memorial of them is distinctly celebrated, and they are severally assigned as instances of everlasting mercy; he slew *Sihon king of the Amorites, for his mercy endureth for ever; and Og the king of Bashan, for his mercy endureth for ever*, Psal. cxxxvi. 19, 20.

1. Israel sent a peaceable message to Sihon king of the Amorites, ver. 12. but received an unpeaceable return, worse than that of the Edomites, to the like message, chap. xx. 18, 20. For the Edomites only refused them passage, and stood upon their own defence to keep them out; but Sihon went out with his forces *against Israel in the wilderness*, out of his own borders, without any provocation given him, ver. 23. and so run himself upon his own ruin. Jephtha said, he was prompted by his politicks to do this, Judg. xi. 20. *Sihon trusted not Israel to pass through his coast*, but his politicks deceived him, for Moses faith, *God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into the hand of Israel*, Deut. ii. 30. The enemies of God's church are often infatuated in those very counsels, which they think most wisely taken. Sihon's army was routed, and not only so, but all his country came into the possession of Israel, ver. 24, 25.

This seizure is justified, 1. Against the Amorites themselves, for they were the aggressors, and provoked the Israelites to battle; and yet, perhaps, that would not have been sufficient to entitle Israel to their land, but that God himself, the King of nations, and Lord of the whole earth, had given them a grant of it. The Amorite was one of the devoted nations, whose land God had promised to Abraham and his seed, which promise should be performed, when the iniquity of the Amorites should be full, Gen. xv. 16. Jephtha insists upon this grant as their title, Judg. xi. 23, 24. The victory God gave them over the Amorites, put them in possession, and then the promise made to their fathers, having given them a right, by virtue of that they kept possession. 2. Against the Moabites, who had formerly been the Lord's proprietors of this country; if they should ever lay claim to it, and should plead, that God himself had provided that *none of their land should be given to Israel for possession*, Deut. ii. 9. Moses here furnisheth posterity with a replication to their plea, and Jephtha makes use of it against the Ammonites two hundred and sixty years after, when Israel's title to this country was questioned. (1.) The justification it self is, that though it is true, this country had belonged to the Moabites, yet the Amorites had taken it from them some time before, and were now in full and quiet possession of it, ver. 26. The Israelites did not take it out of the hands of the Moabites, they had before lost it to the Amorites, and were constrained to give up their pretensions to it; and when Israel had taken it from the Amorites, they were under no obligation to restore it to the Moabites, whose title to it was long since extinguished. See here the uncertainty of worldly possessions, how oft they change their owners, and how soon we may be deprived of them, even when we think our selves most sure of them; *they make themselves wings*. It is our wisdom therefore to secure the good part, which cannot be taken away from us. See also the wisdom of the divine providence, and its perfect foresight, by which, preparation is made long before, for the accomplishment of all God's purposes in their season. This country being designed in due time for Israel, it is beforehand put into the hand of the Amorites, who little think that they have it but as trustees, till Israel comes of age, and then must surrender it. We understand not the vast reaches of providence, but known unto God are all his works, as appears in this instance, that he *set the bounds of the people, according to the number of the children of Israel*, Deut. xxxii. 8. All that land which he intended for his chosen people, he put into the possession of the devoted nations, that were to be driven out. 2. For proof of the allegation, he refers to the authentick records of the country, for so their proverbs, or songs were, one of which he quotes some passages out of, ver. 27—30. which sufficiently proves what it is vouched for, viz. 1. That such

and such places that are here named, though they had been in the possession of the Moabites, were by right of war become the dominion of Sihon king of the Amorites. Heshbon is become his city; and he obtained such a quiet possession of it, that it was built and prepared for him, ver. 27. and the country to Dibon and Nophah was likewise subdued, and annexed to the kingdom of the Amorites, ver. 30. 2. That the Moabites were utterly disabled ever to regain the possession. Even Ar of Moab, though not taken or attempted by Sihon, but still remaining the metropolis of Moab, yet was so wasted by this loss, that it would never be able to make head, ver. 28. The Moabites were undone, and even Chemosh their God had given them up, as unable to rescue them out of the hands of Sihon, ver. 29. By all this it appears, that the Moabites claim to this country was barred for ever. There may be a further reason for inserting this Amorite poem, viz. to shew, That the triumphing of the wicked is short. They that had conquered the Moabites, and insulted over them, are now themselves conquered and insulted over by the Israel of God. It is very probable, that the same Sihon king of the Amorites, that had got this country from the Moabites, now lost it to the Israelites; for though it be said to be taken from a former king of Moab, ver. 26. yet not by a former king of the Amorites; and then it shews how sometimes justice makes men to see the loss of that which they got by violence, and were puffed up with the gain of. They are *exalted but for a little while*, Job xxiv. 24.

2. Og king of Bashan, instead of being warned by the fate of his neighbours, to make peace with Israel, is alarmed by it to make war upon them, which proves in like manner to be his destruction. Og was also an Amorite, and therefore, perhaps, thought himself better able to deal with Israel than his neighbours were, and more likely to prevail, because of his own giantick strength and stature, which Moses takes notice of, Deut. iii. 11. Where he gives a more full account of this story. Here observe, 1. That the Amorite begins the war, ver. 33. He *went out to battle against Israel*. His country was very rich and pleasant, Bashan was famous for the best timber, witness the oaks of Bashan, and the best breed of cattle, witness the bulls and kine of Bashan, and the lambs and rams of that country, which are celebrated, Deut. xxxii. 14. Wicked men do their utmost to secure themselves and their possessions against the judgments of God, but all in vain, when their day comes to fall. 2. That God interests himself in the cause, bids Israel not to fear this threatening force, promiseth a compleat victory, *I have delivered him into thy hand*, ver. 34. the thing is as good as done already, it is all thine own, enter and take possession. Giants are but worms before God's power. 3. That Israel is more than a conqueror, not only routs the enemies army, but gains the enemies country, which afterwards was part of the inheritance of the two tribes and a half, that were first seated on the other side Jordan. God gave Israel these successes, while Moses was yet with them, both for his comfort, that he might see the beginning of that glorious work, which he must not live to see the finishing of; and for the encouragement of the people, in the war of Canaan under Joshua. Though this was to them in comparison but as the day of small things, yet it was an earnest of great things.

C H A P. XXII.

At this chapter begins the famous story of Balak and Balaam, their attempt to curse Israel, and the baffling of that attempt; God's people are long after bid to remember what Balak the king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, that they might know the righteousness of the Lord, Mic. vi. 5. In this chapter we have, 1. Balak's fear of Israel, and the plot he had to get them cursed, ver. 1—4. 2. The embassy he sent to Balaam, a conjurer, to fetch him for that purpose, and the disappointment he met with in that first embassy, ver. 5—14. 3. Balaam's coming to him upon his second message, ver. 15—21. 4. The opposition Balaam met with by the way, ver. 22—35. 5. The interview at length between Balak and Balaam, ver. 36—41.

1. **A**ND the children of Israel set forward, and pitched in the plains of Moab, on this side Jordan by Jericho. 2. ¶ And Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. 3. And Moab was sore afraid of the people, because they *were* many: and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel. 4. And Moab said unto the elders of Midian, Now shall this company lick up all *that are* round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field. And Balak the son of Zippor was king of the Moabites, at that time. 5. He sent messengers therefore unto Balaam the son of Beor, to Pethor, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they

they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me. 6. Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people, for they *are* too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, *that* we may smite them, and *that* I may drive them out of the land: for I wot that he whom thou blessest, is blessed, and he whom thou cursest, is cursed. 7. And the elders of Moab, and the elders of Midian departed, with the rewards of divination in their hand; and they came unto Balaam; and spake unto him the words of Balak. 8. And he said unto them, Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again as the LORD shall speak unto me: And the princes of Moab abode with Balaam. 9. And God came unto Balaam; and said, What men *are* these with thee? 10. And Balaam said unto God, Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, hath sent unto me, *saying*, 11. Behold, *there is* a people come out of Egypt, which covereth the face of the earth: Come now, curse me them; peradventure I shall be able to overcome them, and drive them out. 12. And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them, thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed. 13. And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak, Get you into your land: for the LORD refuseth to give me leave to go with you. 14. And the princes of Moab rose up, and they went unto Balak, and said, Balaam refuseth to come with us.

The children of Israel have at length finished their wanderings in the wilderness, out of which they went up, *chap. xxi. 18.* and are now encamped in the plains of Moab near Jordan, where they continued till they passed through Jordan under Joshua, after the death of Moses. Now here we have, 1. The mighty fright that the Moabites were in upon the approach of Israel, *ver. 2, 3, 4.* They needed not to fear any harm from them, if they knew (and it is probable Moses let them know) the orders God had given Israel, not to contend with the Moabites, nor to use any hostility against them, *Deut. ii. 9.* But if they had any notice of this, they were jealous that it was but a sham, to make them secure, that they might be the easier conquered. Notwithstanding the old friendship between Abraham and Lot, the Moabites resolved to ruin Israel if they could, and therefore they will take it for granted, without any ground for the suspicion, that Israel resolves to ruin them. Thus it is common for those that design mischief, to pretend that mischief is designed against them; and their groundless jealousies must be the colour of their causeless malice. They hear of their triumphs over the Amorite, *ver. 2.* and think their own house is in danger, when their neighbour's is on fire. They observe their multitudes, *ver. 3.* *they were many*; and hence infer how easily they would conquer their country, and all about them, if some speedy and effectual course were not taken to stop the progress of their victorious arms; they shall lick up, or devour us, and *all that are round about us*, as speedily and irresistibly *as the ox eats up the grass*, *ver. 4.* owning himself to be an unequal match for so formidable an enemy. Therefore they were sore afraid and distressed themselves; thus were the wicked *in great fear where no fear was*, *Psal. liii. 5.* These fears they communicated to their neighbours, the elders of Midian, that some measures might be concerted between them, for their common safety; for if the kingdom of Moab fall, the republic of Midian cannot stand long. The Moabites, if they had pleased, might have made a good use of the advances of Israel, and their successes against the Amorites; they had reason to rejoice, and give God and Israel thanks for freeing them from the threatening power of Sihon king of the Amorites; who had taken from them part of their country, and was likely to over-run the rest. They had reason likewise to have courted Israel's friendship, and to have come in to their assistance; but having forsaken the religion of their father Lot, and being sunk into idolatry, they hated the people of the God of Abraham, and were justly infatuated in their counsels, and given up to distress. 2. The project the king of Moab had, to get the people of Israel cursed, *i. e.* to set God against them, who, he perceived, hitherto fought for them. He trusted more to his arts than to his arms, and had a notion, that if he could but get some prophet or other, with his powerful charms, to imprecate evil upon them, and to pronounce a blessing upon himself and his forces, that then, though otherwise too weak, yet he should be able to deal with them. This notion arose, (1.) Out of the remains of some religion, for it owns a dependence upon some invisible sovereign powers that rule in the affairs of the children of men, and determine them, and an obligation upon us to make application to these powers. (2.) Out of the ruins of the true religion; for if the Midianites and Moabites had not wretchedly degenerated from the faith and worship of their pious ancestors, Abraham and Lot; they could not have imagined it possible with their curses, to do any prejudice to a people, who alone adhered to the

service of the true God, from whose service they had revolted. 3. The court he made to Balaam the son of Beor, a famous conjurer, to engage him to curse Israel. This Balaam lived great way off in that country from whence Abraham came, and where Laban lived; but though it is probable, there were many nearer home, that were pretenders to divination, yet none that had so great a reputation for success as Balaam, and Balak will employ the best he can hear of, though he send a great way for him, so much is his heart upon this project. And to gain him (1.) He makes him his friend; complaining to him, as his confident of the danger he was in from the numbers and neighbourhood of the camp of Israel, *ver. 5.* *They cover the face of the earth*, and *they abide over against me.* (2.) In effect he makes him his God; by the great power he attributes to his word, *he whom thou blessest, is blessed*, and *he whom thou cursest, is cursed*, *ver. 6.* The learned bishop Patrick inclines to think, with many of the Jewish writers, that Balaam had been a great prophet, who for the accomplishment of his predictions, and the answers of his prayers, both for good and evil, hath been looked upon justly as a man of great interest with God; but growing proud and covetous, God departed from him, and then to support his sinking credit, he betook himself to diabolical arts. He is called a prophet, *2 Pet. ii. 16.* because he had been one, or, perhaps, he had raised his reputation from the first by his magical charms, as Simon Magus, who bewitched the people so far, that he was called, *The great power of God*, *Acts viii. 10.* Curses pronounced by God's prophets in the name of the Lord, have wonderful effects, as Noah's, *Gen. ix. 25.* Elisha's, *2 Kings ii. 24.* But the curse *causeless shall not come*, *Prov. xxvi. 2.* No more than Goliath's, when he *curst David by his gods*, *1 Sam. xvii. 43.* Let us desire to have the prayers of God's ministers and people for us, and dread having them against us, for they are greatly regarded by him who blessed indeed, and cursed indeed. But Balak cannot rely upon these compliments as sufficient to prevail with Balaam, the main inducement is yet behind, *ver. 7.* they took *the rewards of divination in their hand*; *the wages of unrighteousness*, which he loved, *2 Pet. ii. 15.* 4. The restraint God lays upon Balaam, forbidding him to curse Israel. It is very likely, Balaam, being a curious inquisitive man, was no stranger to Israel's case and character, but had heard that God was with them of a truth; so that he ought to have given these messengers their answer immediately, that he would never curse a people whom God had blessed; but he lodges the messengers, and takes a night's time to consider what he should do, and to receive instructions from God, *ver. 8.* When we enter into a parley with temptations, we are in great danger of being overcome by them. In the night God comes to him, probably in a dream; enquires what business those strangers had with him; He knows it, but he will know it from him. Balaam gives him an account of their errand, *ver. 9, 10, 11.* And God thereupon chargeth him not to go with them, nor attempt to curse that blessed people, *ver. 12.* Thus God sometimes, for the preservation of his people, was pleased to speak to bad men, as to Abimelech, *Gen. xx. 3.* and to Laban, *Gen. xxxi. 24.* And we read of some that were workers of iniquity, and yet in Christ's name prophesied, and *did many wondrous works.* Balaam is charged not only not to go to Balak, but not to offer to curse this people, which he might have attempted at a distance; and the reason is given, *they are blessed.* This was part of the blessing of Abraham, *Gen. xii. 3.* *I will curse him that curseth thee.* So that an attempt to curse them, would be not only fruitless but perilous. Israel had often provoked God in the wilderness, yet he will not suffer their enemies to curse them, for he *rewards them not according to their iniquities.* The blessedness of those whose sin is covered cometh upon them, *Rom. iv. 6, 7.* 5. The return of the messengers without Balaam.

1. Balaam is not faithful in returning God's answer to the messengers, *ver. 13.* He only tells them, *the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you*; he doth not tell them, as he ought to have done, that Israel was a blessed people, and must by no means be cursed, for then the design had been crushed, and the temptation had not been renewed; but he doth in effect, desire them to give his humble service to Balak, and let him know, that he applauded his project, and would have been very glad to gratify him, but truly he has the character of a prophet, and must not go without leave from God, which he has not yet obtained, and therefore for the present he must be excused. Note, Those are a fair mark for Satan's temptations, that speak dimly of divine prohibitions, as if they amounted to no more than the denial of a permission, and as if to go *against God's law*, were only to go *without his leave.* 2. The messengers are not faithful in returning Balaam's answer to Balak; all the account they give of it is, *Balaam refuseth to come with us*, *ver. 14.* intimating, that he only wanted more courtship, and higher proffers; but they are not willing Balak should know that God had signified his disallowance of the attempt. Thus are great men wretchedly abused by the flatteries of those about them, who do all they can to prevent their seeing their own faults and follies.

15. ¶ And Balak sent yet again princes, more, and more honourable than they. 16. And they came to Balaam, and said to him, Thus saith Balak the son of Zippor, Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee, from coming unto me: 17. For I will promote thee unto very great honour, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me: Come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people. 18. And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more. 19. Now therefore I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what the LORD will say unto me more. 20. And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do. 21. And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab.

We have here a second embassy sent to Balaam, to fetch him over to curse Israel. It were well for us, if we would be as earnest and constant in prosecuting a good work, notwithstanding disappointments, as Balak was in pursuing this ill design. The enemies of the church are restless and unwearied in their attempts against it; but he that sits in heaven laughs at them. Observe, 1. The temptation Balak laid before Balaam; he contrived to make this assault more vigorous than the former. It is very probable, he sent double money in the hands of his messengers, but besides that, now he tempted him with honours; laid a bait not only for his covetousness, but for his pride and ambition. How earnestly should we beg of God daily to mortify in us these two limbs of the old man. Those that know how to look with a holy contempt upon worldly wealth and preferment, will find it not so hard a matter, as most men do, to keep a good conscience. See how artfully Balak managed the temptation. 1. The messengers he sent were *more, and more honourable*, ver. 15. He sent to this conjurer, with as great respect and deference to his quality, as if he had been a sovereign prince; apprehending, perhaps, that Balaam had thought himself slighted in the fewness and meanness of the former messengers. 2. The request was very urgent; this powerful prince becomes a suitor to him, *Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee*, ver. 16. No not God, or conscience, or any fear either of sin or shame. 3. The proffers were high; *I will promote thee to very great honour* among the princes of Moab, nay, he gives him a blank, and he shall write his own terms, *I will do whatsoever thou sayest*, i. e. I will give thee whatever thou desirest, and observe whatever thou orderest; thy word shall be a law to me, ver. 17. Thus sinners stick at no pains, spare no cost, and care not how low they stoop for the gratifying either of their luxury, or of their malice; shall we then be stiff and strait-handed in our compliance with the laws of virtue; God forbid. 2. Balaam's seeming resistance of, but real yielding to this temptation. We may here discern in Balaam, a struggle between his convictions and his corruptions. (1.) His convictions charged him to adhere to the command of God, and he spoke their language, ver. 18. Nor could any man have said better, *If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold*, and that is more than he can give, or I can ask, *I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God*. See how honourably he speaks of God, he is Jehovah, my God: Note, Many call God theirs, that are not his, not truly his, because not only, *they swear by the Lord, and by Malcham*. See how respectfully he speaks of the word of God, as one resolved to stick to it, and in nothing to vary from it, and how slightly of the wealth of this world, as if gold and silver were nothing to him in comparison with the favour of God; and yet at the same time, the Searcher of hearts knew that he loved the wages of unrighteousness. Note, It is an easy thing for bad men to speak very good words, and to make a shew of piety, from the teeth outward. There is no judging of men by their words, God knows the heart. (2.) His corruptions at the same time strongly inclined him to go contrary to the command. He seemed to refuse the temptation, ver. 18. But even then he expressed no abhorrence of it, as Christ did when he had the kingdoms of the world offered him, *Get thee hence, Satan*: And as Peter did, when Simon Magus offered him money; *Thy money perish with thee*. But it appears, ver. 19. that he had a great mind to accept the proffer, for he would further attend to know what God would say to him, hoping he might alter his mind, and give him leave to go. This was a vile reflection upon God Almighty, as if he could change his mind, and now at last, suffer those to be cursed whom he had pronounced blessed; and as if he would be brought to allow of that which he had already declared to be evil. Surely he *thought God altogether such a one as himself*. He had already been told what the will of God was, in which he ought to have acquiesced, and not to have desired a rehearing of that cause, which was already so plainly determined.

Note, It is a very great affront to God, and a certain evidence of the dominion of corruption in the heart, to *beg leave to sin*. 3. The permission God gave him to go, ver. 20. God came to him, probably by an angel, and told him he might if he pleased go with Balak's messengers. *So he gave him up to his own heart's lust*. Since thou hast such a mind to go, even go, yet know that *the journey thou undertakest shall not be for thine honour*, for though thou hast leave to go, thou shalt not as thou hopest have leave to curse, *for the word which I shall say unto thee, that thou shalt do*. Note, God hath wicked men in a chain; *hitherto they shall come* by his permission, but no further than he doth permit them. Thus he makes the wrath of man to praise him, yet at the same time, *restrains the remainder of it*. It was in anger that God said to Balaam, go with them, and we have reason to think that Balaam himself so understood it, for we do not find him pleading this allowance, when God reproved him for going. Note, As God sometimes denies the prayers of his people in love, so sometimes he grants the desires of the wicked in wrath. 4. His setting out in the journey, ver. 21. God gave him leave to go *if the men called him*, but he was so fond of the journey, that we don't find he staid for their calling him, but he himself *rose up in the morning*, got every thing ready with all speed, and went with the princes of Moab, who were proud enough that they had carried their point. The apostle describes Balaam's sin here to be, that he *ran greedily into an error for reward*, Jude 11. The love of money is the root of all evil.

22. ¶ And God's anger was kindled; because he went; and the angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary against him: Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him. 23. And the ass saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass to turn her into the way. 24. But the angel of the LORD stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall *being* on this side, and a wall on that side. 25. And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she thrust her self unto the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall: and he smote her again. 26. And the angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place, where *was* no way to turn either to the right hand, or to the left. 27. And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff. 28. And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times? 29. And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee. 30. And the ass said unto Balaam, *Am not I thine ass*, upon which thou hast ridden ever since *I was* thine, unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay. 31. Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face. 32. And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold, I went out to withstand thee, because *thy way is perverse* before me. 33. And the ass saw me, and turned from me these three times: unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive. 34. And Balaam said unto the angel of the LORD, I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore if it displease thee, I will get me back again. 35. And the angel of the LORD said unto Balaam, Go with the men: but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak: So Balaam went with the princes of Balak.

We have here an account of the opposition God gave to Balaam in his journey towards Moab; probably, the princes were gone before, or gone some other way, and Balaam had appointed where he would meet them, or where they should stay for him, for we read nothing of them in this encounter: only that Balaam, like a person of some quality, was attended with his two men; honour enough one would think for such a man, he needed not be beholden to Balak for promotion. 1. Here is God's displeasure against Balaam for undertaking this journey. *God's anger was kindled because he went*, ver. 22. Note, 1. The sin of sinners is not to be thought the less provoking to God for his permitting it. We must not think that, because God doth not by his providence restrain men from sin, therefore he approves of it, or that it is therefore not hateful to him; he suffers sin and yet is angry at it. 2. Nothing is more displeasing to God, than malicious designs against his people; he that touches them, touches

the apple of his eye. 2. The way God took to let Balaam know his displeasure against him. *An angel stood in the way for an adversary.* Now God fulfilled his promise to Israel, *Exod. xxiii. 22. I will be an enemy to thine enemies.* The holy angels are adversaries to sin, and perhaps, are employed more than we are aware of in preventing it, particularly in opposing those that have any ill designs against God's church and people, for whom Michael our prince stands up, *Dan. xii. 1, 10, 21.* What a comfort is this to all that wish well to the Israel of God, that he never suffers wicked men to form any attempt against them, but he sends his holy angels forth to break this attempt, and secure his little ones. When the prophet saw the *four horns that scattered Judah*, at the same time he saw *four carpenters that were to fray those horns*, *Zech. i. 18.* When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him. This angel was an adversary to Balaam, because Balaam counted him his adversary, otherwise those are really our best friends, and we are so to reckon them that stop our progress in a sinful way. The angel stood with his sword drawn, *ver. 23.* A flaming sword, like that in the hands of the cherub, *Gen. iii. 24.* Turning every way. Note, The holy angels are at war with those with whom God is angry, for they are the ministers of his justice.

Balaam has notice given him of God's displeasure, 1. By the ass, and that *did not startle him.* The ass saw the angel, *ver. 23.* How vainly did Balaam boast that he was a man whose eyes were open, and that he saw the visions of the Almighty, *chap. xxiv. 3, 4.* when the ass he rode on saw more than he did, his eyes being blinded with covetousness and ambition, and dazzled with the rewards of divination. Note, Many have God against them, and his holy angels, but are not aware of it. The ass knows his owner, sees his danger, but Balaam doth not know, doth not consider, *Isa. i. 3. Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see.* Let none be puffed up with a conceit of visions and revelations, when even an ass saw an angel; yet let those be ashamed of their own sottishness, worse than that of the beasts that perish, who when they are told of the sword of God's wrath drawn against them, while they persist in wicked ways, yet will go on; the ass understood the law of self-preservation better than so, for to save both her self and her senseless rider. (1.) She turned aside out of the way, *ver. 23.* Balaam should have taken the hint of this, and considered whether he were not out of the way of his duty, but instead of that he beat her into the way again. Thus they who by wilful sin are running head-long into perdition, are angry at those that would prevent their ruin. (2.) She had not gone much further, but she sees the angel again, and then to avoid him runs up to a wall, and crushes her rider's foot, *ver. 24, 25.* How many ill accidents are we liable to, in travelling upon the road, from which if we are preserved, we must own our obligations to the divine providence, which by the ministry of angels keeps us in all our ways, lest we dash our foot against a stone; but if we at any time meet with a disaster, it should put us upon enquiry, whether our way be right in the sight of God or no? The crushing of Balaam's foot, though it was the saving of his life, yet provoked him so much that he smote his ass the second time. So angry are we apt to be at that which though a present uneasiness, yet is a real kindness. (3.) Upon the next encounter with the angel, the ass fell down under Balaam, *ver. 26, 27.* He ought to have considered, that there was certainly something extraordinary in this, for his ass was not resty, nor did she use to serve him thus; but it is common for those whose hearts are fully set in them to do evil, to push on violently, and break through all the difficulties which providence lays in their way to give check to them, and to stop them in their career. Balaam the third time smote his ass, though she had now done him the best piece of service that ever she did him, saving him from the sword of the angel, and by her falling down, teaching him to do likewise. (4.) When all this would not work upon him, God opened the mouth of the ass, and she spoke to him once and again; and yet neither did this move him, *ver. 28.* The Lord opened the mouth of the ass. This was a great miracle, quite above the power of nature, and wrought by the power of the God of nature; who made man's mouth, and taught him to speak, for otherwise (since we learn to speak purely by imitation, and therefore they that are born deaf are consequently dumb) the first man had never spoke, nor any of his seed. He that made man speak, could, when he pleased, make the ass to speak with man's voice, *2 Pet. ii. 16.* Here Mr. Ainsworth observes, that the devil when he tempted our first parents to sin, did it by a subtle serpent: But God when he would convince Balaam, did it by a silly ass, a creature dull and sottish to a proverb; for Satan corrupts mens minds by the craftiness of those that lie in wait to deceive, but Christ has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. By a dumb ass God rebukes the madness of the prophet, for he will never want reprovers, but when he pleases can make the stones to cry out as witnesses to him, *Luke xix. 40. Hab. ii. 11.* 1. The ass complained of Balaam's cruelty, *ver. 28. What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me?* Note, The righteous God will not see the meanest and weakest abused; but either they shall be enabled to speak in their own defence, or he will some way or other speak for them. If God would not suffer a beast

to be wronged, much less a man, a christian, a child of his own. We cannot open the mouth of the dumb, as God did here, but we may and must open our mouth for the dumb, *Prov. xxxi. 8. Job xxxi. 13.* The ass's complaint was just, *what have I done?* Note, Those we smite with hand or tongue, we should consider what they have done unto us, and what provocation they have given us. We hear it not; but thus the whole creation groans being burthened, *Rom. viii. 22.*

It was much that Balaam was not astonished to hear his ass speak, and put to confusion; but some think being a conjurer, it was no new thing to him to be thus spoken to by his familiars; others rather think, that his brutish head-strong passion so blinded him, that he could not observe or consider the strangeness of the thing. Nothing befots men worse than unbridled anger doth. Balaam in his fury wished he had a sword to kill his ass with, *ver. 29.* See his impotency; can he think by his curses to do mischief to Israel, that has it not in his power to kill his own ass? This he cannot do, yet he fain would; and what would he get by that, but make himself so much the poorer, (as many do) to gratify his passion and revenge; such was the madness of this false prophet. Here bishop Hall observes, it is ill falling into the hands of those, whom the brute creatures find unmerciful; for a good man regardeth the life of his beast. The ass reasoned with him, *ver. 30.* God enabled not only a dumb creature to speak, but a dull creature to speak to the purpose. Three things she argues with him from, (1.) His propriety in her; *Am not I thine ass?* Note, 1. God has given to man a dominion over the creatures: They are delivered into his hand to be used, and put under his feet to be ruled. 2. Even wicked people have a title to the possessions God gives them, which they are not to be wronged of. 3. The dominion God has given us over the creatures, is a good reason why we should not abuse them. We are the Lord's, and therefore must not be tyrants. (2.) Her serviceableness to him, — *On which thou hast ridden.* Note, It is good for us often to consider how useful the inferior creatures are and have been to us, that we may be thankful to God, and tender of them. (3.) That she was not wont to do so by him; had never before crushed his foot, or fallen down under him; he might therefore conclude, there was something more than ordinary that made her do so now. Note, 1. The seldomness of an offence should moderate our displeasure against an offender. 2. When the creatures depart from their wonted obedience to us, we should enquire the cause within our selves, and be humbled for our sin. 2. Balaam at length hath notice of God's displeasure, by the angel, and that did startle him. When God opened his eyes he saw the angel, *ver. 31.* and then he himself fell flat upon his face, in reverence of that glorious messenger, and in fear of the sword he saw in his hand. God has many ways of breaking and bringing down the hard and unhumbled heart. 1. The angel reprov'd him for his outrageousness, *ver. 32, 33. Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass?* Whether we consider it or no, it is certain God will call us to account for the abuses done to his creatures. Nay, he shews him, how much more reason he had to smite upon his breast, and to condemn himself, than to fly out thus against his ass; *thy way is perverse before me*, and then how canst thou expect to prosper? and how much wiser his ass was than he himself, and how much beholden he was to her that she turned aside; it was for his safety, and not for her own, for had she gone on, he had been slain, and she had been saved alive. Note, When our eyes are opened, we shall see what danger we are in in a sinful way; and how much it was for our advantage to be crossed in it, and what fools we were to quarrel with our crosses which helped to save our lives. 2. Balaam then seemed to relent, *ver. 34. I have sinned*; sinned in undertaking this journey, sinned in pushing on so violently; but he excuses it with this, that he saw not the angel, but now he did see him he was willing to go back again. That which was displeasing to God was not so much his going, as his going with a malicious design against Israel, and a secret hope, that notwithstanding the proviso with which his permission was clogged, he might prevail to curse them, and so gratify Balak, and get preferment under him. Now this wickedness of his heart it doth not appear that he is sensible of, or willing to own, but if he find he cannot go forward, he will be content (since there is no remedy) to go back. Here is no sign that his heart is turned, but if his hands be tied, he cannot help it. Thus many leave their sins, only because their sins have left them. There seems to be a reformation of the life, but what will that avail if there be no renovation of the heart? 3. The angel however continued his permission, *ver. 35. Go with the men.* Go, if thou hast a mind to be made a fool of, and to be shamed before Balak, and all the princes of Moab; Go, but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak, whether thou wilt or no. For this seems not to be a precept, but a prediction of the event, that he should not only not be able to curse Israel, but he should be forced to bless them; which would be more for the glory of God, and his own confusion, than if he had turned back. Thus God gave him fair warning, but he would not take it, he went with the princes of Balak. For the iniquity of Balaam's covetousness God was wroth and smote him, but he went on frowardly, *Isa. lvii. 17.*

36. And when Balak heard that Balaam was come, he went out to meet him, unto a city of Moab, which is in the border of Arnon, which is in the utmost coast. 37. And Balak said unto Balaam, Did I not earnestly send unto thee to call thee? Wherefore camest thou not unto me? Am I not able indeed to promote thee to honour? 38. And Balaam said unto Balak, Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say any thing? the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak. 39. And Balaam went with Balak, and they came unto Kirjath-Huzoth. 40. And Balak offered oxen, and sheep, and sent to Balaam, and to the princes that were with him. 41. And it came to pass on the morrow, that Balak took Balaam, and brought him up into the high places of Baal, that thence he might see the utmost part of the people.

We have here the meeting between Balak and Balaam, confederate enemies to God's Israel, but here they seem to differ in their expectations of the success.

1. Balak speaks of it with confidence, not doubting but to gain his point now Balaam was come. In expectation of this he went out to meet him, even to the utmost border of his country, *ver. 36.* partly to gratify his own impatient desire to see one he had such great expectations from, and partly to do honour to Balaam, and so to engage him with his utmost power to serve him. See what respect heathen princes paid to those that had but the name and face of prophets, and pretended to have any interest in heaven; and how welcome one was that came with his mouth full of curses. What a shame is it then, that the ambassadors of Christ are so little respected by most, so much despised by some and that they are so coldly entertained, who bring tidings of peace and a blessing! Balak has now nothing to complain of, but that Balaam did not come sooner, *ver. 37.* And he thinks he should have considered both the importunity Balak had used, *Did I not earnestly send to thee?* (and the importunity of lesser people than kings has prevailed with many against their inclinations) and that he should also have considered Balak's intentions concerning him: *Am not I able to promote thee to honour?* Balak, as king, was in his own kingdom the fountain of honour, and Balaam should have his choice of all the preferments that were in his gift; he therefore takes himself affronted by Balaam's delays, which looked as if he thought the honours he prepared not worthy his acceptance. Note, Promotion to honour is a very tempting bait to many people; and it were well if we would be drawn into the service of God by the honour he sets before us. Why do we delay to come unto him? *Is not he able to promote us to honour?* 2. Balaam speaks doubtfully of the issue, and bids Balak not depend too much upon him, *ver. 38.* *Have I now any power at all to say any thing?* I am come, but what the nearer am I? Gladly would I curse Israel; but I must not, I cannot, God will not suffer me. He seems to speak with vexation at the hook in his nose, and the bridle in his jaws, such as Sennacherib was tied up with, *Isa. xxxvii. 29.* 3. They address themselves with all speed to the business. Balaam is nobly entertained over night, a sacrifice of thanksgiving is offered to the gods of Moab, for the safe arrival of this welcome guest, and he is treated with a feast upon the sacrifice, *ver. 40.* And the next morning, that no time might be lost, Balak takes Balaam in his chariot to the high places of his kingdom, not only because their holiness, (such as it was) he thought, might give some advantage to his divinations but their height might give him a convenient prospect of the camp of Israel, which was to be the butt or mark at which he must shoot his envenomed arrows. And now Balaam is really as solicitous to please Balak, as ever he had pretended to be to please God. See what need we have to pray every day, *Our father in heaven, lead us not into temptation.*

C H A P. XXIII.

In this chapter we have Balak and Balaam busy at work to do Israel a mischief, and for ought appears, neither Moses nor the elders of Israel know any thing of the matter, nor are in a capacity to break the snare but God, who keeps Israel, and neither slumbers nor sleeps, baffles the attempt, without any intercession or contrivance of theirs. Here is 1. The first attempt to curse Israel. (1.) The preparation made for it by sacrifice, *ver. 1, 3.* (2.) The contrary instruction God gave Balaam, *ver. 4, 5.* (3.) The blessing Balaam was compelled to pronounce upon Israel instead of a curse, *ver. 7—10.* (4.) The great disappointment Balak was hereby put under, *ver. 11, 12.* 2. The second attempt in the same manner made, and in the same manner balked, *ver. 13—26.* 3. Preparations made for a third attempt, *ver. 27—30.* the issue of which we have in the next chapter.

1. **A**ND Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven oxen, and seven rams. 2. And Balak did as Balaam had spoken; No. XII.

and Balak and Balaam offered on every altar a bullock and a ram. 3. And Balaam said unto Balak, stand by thy burnt-offering, and I will go: peradventure the LORD will come to meet me: and whatsoever he sheweth me, I will tell thee. And he went to an high place. 4. And God met Balaam, and he said unto him, I have prepared seven altars, and I have offered upon every altar a bullock and a ram. 5. And the LORD put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak. 6. And he returned unto him, and lo, he stood by his burnt-sacrifice, he, and all the princes of Moab. 7. And he took up his parable and said, Balak the king of Moab, hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me, Jacob, and come defy Israel. 8. How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the LORD hath not defied? 9. For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. 10. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his. 11. And Balak said unto Balaam, What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and behold thou hast blessed them altogether. 12. And he answered and said, Must I not take heed to speak that which the LORD hath put in my mouth?

Here is, 1. Great preparation made for the cursing of Israel. That which was aimed at was to engage the God of Israel to forsake them, and either to be on Moab's side, or to stand neuter. O the sottishness of superstition, to imagine that God will be at mens beck! Balaam and Balak think to bribe him with altars and sacrifices, offered without any warrant or institution of his: as if he would eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats. Ridiculous nonsense, to think that these would please God; and gain his favour, when there could be in them no exercise either of faith or obedience. Yet, it should seem, they offered these sacrifices to the God of heaven, the supreme Numen, and not to any of their local deities. But the multiplying of altars was an instance of their degeneracy from the religion of their ancestors, and their apostacy to idolatry, for they that multiplied altars, multiplied gods, *Ephraim made many altars to sin, Hos. viii. 11.* Thus they liked not to retain God in their knowledge, but became vain in their imaginations; and yet presumptuously expected hereby to gain God over to them from Israel, who had his sanctuary among them and his anointed altar.

Observe here, (1.) How very imperious Balaam was, proud to have the command of a king, and to give law to princes. Such is the spirit of that wicked one who exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; with what authority doth Balaam give orders, *build me here* (in the place I have pitched upon) *seven altars* of stone or turf. Thus he covers his malice against Israel with a shew of devotion, but his sacrifice was an abomination, being brought with such a wicked mind, *Prov. xxi. 27.* That which he aimed at was not to honour God with the sacrifices of righteousness, but to enrich himself with the wages of unrighteousness. (2.) How very obsequious Balak was. The altars were presently built, and the sacrifices prepared, the best of the sort, *seven bullocks and seven rams.* Balak sticks not at the charge, nor doth he snuff at it, or think it either a weariness or a disparagement to stand by his burnt-offering as Balaam ordered him.

2. The turning of the curse into a blessing, by the over-ruling power of God, in love to Israel; which is the account Moses gives of it, *Deut. xxiii. 5.*

1. God puts the blessing into the mouth of Balaam. While the sacrifices were burning Balaam retired, he went solitary, into some dark grove on the top of the high place, *ver. 3. marg.* Thus much he knew, that solitude gives a good opportunity or communion with God; those that would meet with him must retire from the world, and the business and conversation of it, and love to be private, reckoning themselves never less alone than when alone, because the Father is with them. Enter therefore into thy closet, and shut the door, and be assured God will meet thee, if thou seek him in the due order: but Balaam retired with a peradventure only, having some thoughts that God might meet him, but being conscious to himself of guilt, and knowing that God had lately met him in anger, he had reason to speak doubtfully, *ver. 3.* *Peradventure the Lord will come to meet me.* But let not such a man think that he shall receive any favour from God. Nay it should seem, though he pretended to go meet with God, he really designed to use enchantments, see *chap. xxiv. 1.* But whatever he intended, God designed to serve his own glory by him, and therefore met Balaam, *ver. 4.* *What communion has light with darkness?* No friendly communion we may

may be sure; Balaam's way was still perverse, and God was still an adversary to him; but Balak having chosen him for his oracle, God would constrain him to utter such a confession to the honour of God and Israel, as should render those for ever inexcusable, who should appear in arms against them. When Balaam was aware that God met him, probably by an angel, he boasted of his performances, *I have prepared seven altars, and offered upon every altar a bullock and a ram.* How had he done it? It cost him nothing, it was done at Balak's expence; yet (1.) He brags of it, as if he had done a mighty thing. The acts of devotion which are done in hypocrisy, are commonly reflected upon with pride and vain-glory. Thus the Pharisee went up to the temple to boast of his religion, *Luk. xviii. 12.* (2.) He insists upon it as a reason why God should gratify him in his desire to curse Israel, as if now he had made God his debtor, and might draw upon him for what he pleased. He thinks God is so much beholden to him for these sacrifices, that the least he can do in recompence for them, is to sacrifice his Israel to the malice of the king of Moab. Note, It is a common cheat that wicked people put upon themselves to think, that by the shews of piety they may prevail with God to countenance them, and connive at them in their greatest immoralities, especially in persecution, *Isa. lxvi. 5.* However, though the sacrifice was an abomination, God took the occasion of Balaam's expectation, to put a word into his mouth, *ver. 5. for the answer of the tongue is from the Lord;* and thus he would shew how much they are mistaken, who say, *with our tongue we will prevail, our lips are our own,* *Psal. xii. 4.* He that made man's mouth knows how to manage it, and to serve his own purposes by it. This speaks terror to daring sinners, that *set their mouth against the heaven, God can make their own tongues to fall upon themselves,* *Psal. lxiv. 8.* And it speaks comfort to God's witnesses, whom at any time he calls out to appear for him; if God put a word into the mouth of Balaam, who would have defied God and Israel? Surely he will not be wanting to those who desire to glorify God, and edify his people by their testimony; but it *shall be given them in that same hour what they should speak.* 2. Balaam pronounced the blessing in the ears of Balak. He found him *standing by his burnt-sacrifice,* *ver. 6.* closely attending it, and earnestly expecting the success. Those that would have an answer of peace from God must abide by the sacrifice, and *attend on the Lord without distraction, not weary in well-doing.* Balaam having fixed himself in the place appointed for his denouncing curses against Israel, which perhaps he had drawn up in form ready to deliver, takes up his parable, and it proves a blessing, *ver. 7.* He pronounceth Israel safe and happy, and so blest them.

1. He pronounceth them safe, and out of the reach of his envenomed darts. (1.) He owns the design was to curse them; that Balak sent for him out of his own country, and he came with that intent, *ver. 7.* The message sent to him was, *come curse me Jacob, and come defy Israel.* Balak intended to make war upon them, and he would have Balaam to bless his arms, and to prophecy and pray for the ruin of Israel. (2.) He owns the design defeated, and his own inability to accomplish it. He could not so much as give them an ill word, or an ill wish. *How shall I curse whom God has not cursed,* *ver. 8.* not that therefore he would not do it, but therefore he could not do it. This is a fair confession, 1. Of the weakness and impotency of his own magic skill, for which others valued him so much, and doubtless he valued himself no less. He was the most celebrated man of that profession, and yet owns himself baffled. God had warned the Israelites not to use divination, *Lev. xix. 31.* and this providence gave them a reason for that law, by shewing them the weakness and folly of it. As they had seen the Magicians of Egypt befooled, so here the great conjurer of the east. See *Isa. xlvii. 12, 13, 14.* 2. It is a confession of the sovereignty and dominion of the divine power. He owns that he could do no more than God would suffer him to do, for God could over-rule all his purposes, and turn his counsels headlong. 3. It is a confession of the inviolable security of the people of God. Note, 1. God's Israel are owned and blessed of him. He has not cursed them, for they are delivered from the curse of the law, he has not defied them, nor rejected or abandoned them, though mean and vile. 2. Those that have the good will of heaven have the ill will of hell: the serpent and his seed have an enmity to them. 3. Though the enemies of God's people may prevail far against them, yet they cannot curse them; that is, they cannot do them any real mischief, much less a ruining mischief, for they cannot *separate them from the love of God.* *Rom. viii. ult.* 2. He pronounceth them happy—in three things. 1. Happy in their peculiarity, and distinction from the rest of the nations, *ver. 9.* *From the top of the rocks I see him.* And it seems to have been a mighty surprize to him, that whereas (it is probable) they were represented to him as a rude and disorderly rabble, that infested the countries round about in rambling parties, he saw them a regular incorporated camp, in which appeared all the marks of discipline and good order; he saw them a people dwelling alone, and foresaw they would continue so, and their singularity would be their unspeakable honour. Persons of quality we call persons of distinction, this was Israel's praise, though

their enemies turned it to their reproach, that they differed from all the neighbour nations, not only in their religion and sacred rites, but in their diet and dress, and common usages, as a people called out of the world, and not to be conformed to it. They never lost their reputation till they mingled themselves among the heathen, *Psal. cvi. 35.* Note, It is the duty and honour of those that are dedicated to God to be separated from the world, and not to walk according to the course and custom of it. Those who make conscience of peculiar duties, may take the comfort of peculiar privileges, which it is likely Balaam has an eye to here; God's Israel shall not stand upon a level with other nations, but be dignified above them all, as a people near to God, and set apart for him. 2. Happy in their numbers; not so few and despicable as they were represented to him, but an innumerable company, which made them both honourable and formidable, *ver. 10.* *Who can count the dust of Jacob?* The number of the people, was the thing that Balaam was vexed at, *chap. xxii. 3.* *Moab was afraid of them because they were many,* and God doth here by Balaam, increase that fear and vexation, foretelling their further increase. Balak would have him see the utmost part of the people, *chap. xxii. 41.* hoping the more he saw of them, the more he would be exasperated against them, and throw about his curses with the more keenness and rage, but it proved quite contrary, instead of being angry at their numbers, he admired them. The better acquainted we are with God's people, the better opinion we have of them. He takes notice of the number, (1.) Of the dust of Jacob, i. e. the people of Jacob, concerning whom it was foretold that they should be as the dust for number, *Gen. xxviii. 14.* Thus he owns the fulfilling of the promise made to the fathers, and expects that it should be yet further accomplished. Perhaps it was part of David's fault in numbring the people, that he offered to count the dust of Jacob, which God had said should be innumerable. (2.) Of the fourth part of Israel; alluding to the form of their camp, which was cast into four squadrons, under four standards. Note, God's Israel is a very great body, his spiritual Israel is so, and they will appear to be so, when they shall all be gathered together unto him in the great day, *Rev. vii. 9.* 3. *Happy in their last end.* Let me die the death of the righteous Israelites, that are in covenant with God, and let my last end, or future state, be like theirs, or my recompence, viz. in the other world. Here, 1. It is taken for granted, that death is the end of all men; the righteous themselves must die, and it is good for each of us to think of this with application, as Balaam himself doth here, speaking of his own death. 2. He goes upon the supposition of the soul's immortality, and a different state on the other side death, to which this is a noble testimony, and an evidence of its being anciently known and believed. For how could the death of the righteous be more desirable than the death of the wicked upon any other account, but that of a happiness in another world, since in the manner and circumstances of dying we see all things come alike to all. 3. He pronounceth the righteous truly blessed, not only while they live, but when they die; which makes their death not only more desirable than the death of others, but even more desirable than life itself; for in that sense his wish may be taken, not only when I do die, let me die the death of the righteous, but I could even now be willing to die, on that condition that I might die the death of the righteous, and take my end this moment, provided it might be like his. Very near the place where Balaam now was, on one of the mountains of Moab, not long after this Moses died, and to that perhaps God that put this word into his mouth, designed it should have a reference; that by it Moses might be encouraged to go up and die such a death, as Balaam himself wished to have died. 4. He shews his opinion of religion to be better than his resolution; there are many who desire to die the death of the righteous, but do not endeavour to live the life of the righteous, gladly would they have their end like theirs, but not their way. They would be saints in heaven but not saints on earth. This is the desire of the slothful, which kills him because his hands refuse to labour. This of Balaam's is only a wish, not a prayer, and it is a vain wish, being only a wish of the end, without any care of the means. Thus far this blessing goes, even to death and beyond it, as far as the last end. Now we are told, *ver. 11, 12.*

1. How Balak fretted at it, *ver. 11.* He pretended to honour the Lord with his sacrifices, and to wait for the answer God would send him, and yet when it did not prove according to his mind, he forgot God, and flew out in a great passion against Balaam, as if it had been purely his doing, *What hast thou done unto me?* how hast thou disappointed me? sometimes God makes the enemies of his church a vexation one to another, while he that sits in heaven laughs at them, and the efforts of their impotent malice. 2. How Balaam was forced to acquiesce in it. He submits, because he cannot help it, and yet humours the thing well enough, as if he had been mighty conscientious, answering Balak with the gravity of a prophet, *Must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord has put in my mouth?* *ver. 12.* Thus a confession of God's over-ruling power, is extorted from a wicked prophet, to the further confusion of a wicked prince.

13. And Balak said unto him, Come, I pray thee, with me unto another place, from whence thou mayest see them: thou shalt see but the utmost part of them, and shalt not see them all: and curse me them from thence. 14. And he brought him into the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah, and built seven altars, and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar. 15. And he said unto Balak, Stand here by thy burnt-offering, while I meet the LORD yonder. 16. And the LORD met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth, and said, Go again unto Balak, and say thus. 17. And when he came to him, behold, he stood by his burnt-offering, and the princes of Moab with him. And Balak said unto him, What hath the LORD spoken? 18. And he took up his parable, and said, Rise up, Balak, and hear; hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor: 19. God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? 20. Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it. 21. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them. 22. God brought them out of Egypt: he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn. 23. Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought! 24. Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down, until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain. 25. And Balak said unto Balaam, Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all. 26. But Balaam answered and said unto Balak, Told not I thee, saying, All that the LORD speaketh, that I must do? 27. And Balak said unto Balaam, Come, I pray thee, I will bring thee unto another place: peradventure it will please God, that thou mayest curse me them from thence. 28. And Balak brought Balaam unto the top of Peor, that looketh toward Jeshimon. 29. And Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven bullocks, and seven rams. 30. And Balak did as Balaam had said, and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar.

Here is, i. Preparation made the second time as before for the cursing of Israel. (1.) The place is changed, *ver. 13.* Balak fancied that Balaam having so full a prospect of the whole camp of Israel; *from the top of the rocks, ver. 9.* he was either enamoured with the beauty of it that he would not curse them; or so affrighted with the terror of it that he durst not, and therefore he would bring him to another place, from which he might see only some part of them; which would appear more despicable, and that part at least which would lie in view he hoped he might obtain leave to curse, and so by degrees he should get ground against them; intending, no doubt if he had gained this point, to make his attack on that part of the camp of Israel, which Balaam now had in his eye, and into which he was to throw the fire-balls of his curses. See how restless and unwearied the church's enemies are in their malicious attempts to ruin it; they leave no stone unturned, no project untried to compass it. O that we were as full of contrivance and resolution in prosecuting good designs for the glory of God! (2.) The sacrifices are repeated, new altars are built, a bullock and a ram offered on every altar, and Balak attends his sacrifice as closely as ever, *ver. 14, 15.* Were we thus earnest to obtain the blessing, as Balak was to procure a curse, (designedly upon Israel, but really upon himself and his people) we would not stick at the return both of the charge and of the labour of religious exercises. (3.) Balaam renews his attendance on God; and God meets him the second time, and puts another word into his mouth, not to reverse the former; but to ratify it, *ver. 16, 17.* If God said not to Balaam *seek in vain*; much less will he say so to any of the seed of Jacob, who shall surely find him not only as Balaam their instructor and oracle, but their bountiful rewarder. When Balaam returned, Balak was impatient to know what message he had, *What hath the Lord spoken?* Is there any better tidings yet, any hopes of speeding? This should be our enquiry when we come to hear the word of God. See *Jer. xxiii. 35.* 2. A second conversion of the curse into a blessing by the over-ruling power of God; and this blessing is both larger, and stronger than the former, and quite cuts off all hopes of altering it. Balak having been so forward to ask what the Lord had spoken, *ver. 17.* Balaam now addresseth himself particularly to him, *ver. 18. Rise up, Balak, and hear.* It was a message from God he had to deliver, and it is required of Balak, tho' a king, (1.)

That he attend; hear, and *hearken*, with a close application of mind, let not a word slip. (2.) That he attend with reverence, *Rise up and hear.* His successor Eglon when he was to receive a message from God, *rose out of his seat*, *Judg. iii. 20.*

Two things Balaam in this discourse informs Balak of, sorely to his grief and disappointment. 1. That he had no reason to hope he should ruin Israel; it would be to no purpose to attempt it, and he would deceive himself if he expected it; for two reasons. 1. Because God is unchangeable, *ver. 19. God is not a man that he should lie.* Men change their minds, and therefore break their words; they lie, because they repent. But God doth neither. He never changes his mind, and therefore never recalls his promise. Balaam had owned, *ver. 8.* That he could not alter God's counsel; and from thence he infers here, that God himself would not alter it; such is the imperfection of man, and such the perfection of God. It is impossible for God to lie, *Heb. vi. 18.* And when in scripture he is said to repent, it is not meant of any change of his mind, for he is in one mind, and who can turn him! but only of the change of his way. This is a great truth, that with God there is no *variableness or shadow of turning*: Now here, 1. He appeals to Balak himself concerning it: *Hath he said, and shall he not do it?* said it in his own purpose, and shall he not perform it in his providence; according to the counsel of his will? Hath he spoken in his word, in his promise, and shall he not make it good? Can we think otherwise of God, but that he is unchangeably one with himself; and true to his word? All his decrees are unalterable, and all his promises inviolable. 2. He applies this general truth to the case in hand, *ver. 20.* "He hath blessed and I cannot reverse it," *i. e.* I cannot prevail with him to reverse it. Israel was of old a blessed people, a seed that the Lord had blessed; the blessing of Abraham came upon them; they were born under the blessing of the covenant, and born to the blessing of Canaan, and therefore they could not be cursed, unless you could suppose, that the God of eternal truth should break his word, and become false to himself and his people. 2. Because Israel is at present unblameable, *ver. 21.* *He has not beheld iniquity in Jacob.* Not but that there was iniquity in Jacob, and God saw it; but, 1. There was not such a degree of iniquity as might provoke God to abandon them, and give them up to ruin. As bad as they were, they were not so bad: 2. There was no idolatry among them, which is in a particular manner called iniquity, and perverseness; we have found nothing of that kind in Israel since the golden calf, and therefore though they were in other instances very provoking, yet God would not cast them off. Balaam knew that nothing would separate between them and God but sin; while God saw no reigning sin among them, he would send no destroying curse among them; and therefore as long as they kept in with God, he despaired of ever doing them any mischief. Note, While we keep from sin, we keep from harm. Some give another sense of those words: they read it thus: *He has not beheld wrong offered to Jacob, nor will he see any grievance done to Israel, i. e.* he hath not, nor will he permit it, or allow it; he will not see Israel injured, but he will right them, and avenge their quarrel. Note, God will not bear to see any injury done to his church and people; for what is done against them, he takes as done against himself, and will reckon for it accordingly. 3. Because the power of both was irresistible. He shews Balak there was no dealing with them; it was to no purpose to offer it; for, 1. They had the presence of God with them. *The Lord his God is with him*, in a particular manner, and not provoked to withdraw from him. 2. They had the joy of that presence, and were always made to triumph in it; *the shout or alarm of a king is among them.* They shout against their enemies; as sure of victory and success, glorying continually in God as their king, and conqueror for them. 3. They had had the experience of the benefit of God's presence with them, and his power engaged for them. For God brought them out of Egypt, *ver. 22.* The power that had done that could never be restrained, never resisted; and having begun so gloriously, would no doubt finish gloriously. 4. While they had God's presence with them, they had the strength of an unicorn, able to make head against all that opposed them. See *chap. xxiv. 8.* Such is the strength which the God of Israel gives unto his people.

Now from all this he infers, that it was to no purpose for him to think of doing them a mischief by all the arts he could use; *ver. 23.* 1. He owns himself baffled. Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, so as to prevail. The curses of hell can never take place against the blessings of heaven. Not but that attempts of this kind would be made, but they would certainly be fruitless and ineffectual. Some observe, that Jacob speaks the church low and afflicted, Israel speaks it prosperous and advanced; but be the church high or low, be her friends few or many; do second causes smile or frown, it comes all to one. No weapon formed against it shall prosper. Note, God easily can, and certainly will, baffle and disappoint all the devices and designs of the powers of darkness against his church, so that they shall not prevail to destroy it. 2. He foresees that this would be remembered in time to come. *According to this time; i. e.* with reference to this we are now about, it shall be said concerning Jacob and Israel, and said by them, *What hath God wrought?* What great things hath God done for his people? It shall be said with wonder, joy, and

and thankfulness, and a challenge to the neighbour nations, to produce any like instances of the care of their gods for them. Note, The defeating of the designs of the church's enemies, ought to be had in everlasting remembrance to the glory of God. *There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun.* What Balaam saith here concerning the preheminance of the God of Israel, above all the gods of the Gentiles, perhaps Moses refers to, when he saith, Deut. xxxii. 31. *Their rock is not as our rock, even our enemies themselves being judges;* Balaam particularly. Balak therefore has no hopes of ruining Israel; but 2. Balaam shews him, that he had more reason to fear being ruined by them, for they were likely to make bloody work among his neighbours, and if he and his country escaped, it was not because he was too big for them to meddle with, but because he fell not within their commission, ver. 24. Behold and tremble, the people that now have lain for some time closely encamped, do but repose themselves for a while like a lion couchant, but shortly they *shall rise up as a great lion*, a lion rampant, that *shall not lie down till he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain.* This seems to point at the victories he foresaw they would obtain over the Canaanites; that they would never lay down their arms, till they had made a compleat conquest of the land they had now in view; and when his neighbour's house was on fire, he had reason to think his own in danger.

Now what was the issue of this disappointment! 1. Balak and Balaam were both of them sick of the cause. 1. Balak is now willing to have his conjurer silenced. Since he cannot say what he would have him, he wishes him to say nothing. *Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all,* ver. 25. If thou canst not curse them, prithee do not bless them. If thou canst not assist and encourage my forces, yet do not oppose and discourage them. Note, God can make those that depart from him weary of the multitude of their counsels, Isa. xlvii. 13.—lvii. 10. 2. Balaam is still willing to own himself over-ruled, and appeals to what he had said in the beginning of this enterprize, chap. xxii. 38. *All that the Lord speaketh that I must do,* ver. 26. This shews, (1.) In general, That the way of man is not in himself; there are many devices in man's heart, but God's counsels shall stand. (2.) In particular, That as no weapon formed against the church shall prosper, so every tongue that riseth against her in judgment, God will control and condemn, Isa. liv. 17. 2. Yet they resolve to make another attempt. They think it scorn to be baffled, and therefore pursue the design, though it be only to their further confusion. And now the third time, 1. They change the place. Balak is at last convinced that it is not Balaam's fault, on whom before he had laid the blame, but that really he was under a divine check, and therefore now he hopes to bring him to a place, from whence God might at least permit him to curse them, ver. 27. Probably, he and Balaam were the more encouraged thus to repeat their attempt, because God had the second time allowed Balaam to go, though he had forbidden him the first time; because by repeated trials they had carried that point, they hope in like manner to carry this. Thus because sinners are connived at, and sentence against their evil works is not executed speedily, their hearts are the more fully set in them to do evil. The place he now took him to was the top of Peor; the most eminent high place in all his country, where, it is probable, Baal was worshipped, and was thence called Baal-Peor. He chose this place in hope; either, (1.) That it being the residence (as he fancied) of Baal, the god of Moab, Jehovah the God of Israel would not, or could not come thither to hinder the operation; or, (2.) That it being a place acceptable to his god, it would be so to the Lord, and there he would be brought into a good humour. Such idle conceits have foolish men of God, and so vain are their imaginations concerning him. Thus the Syrians fancied the Lord to be God of the hills, but not of the vallies, 1 Kings xx. 28. as if he were more powerful in one place, than he is in every place. 2. They repeat their sacrifice, seven bullocks, and seven rams, upon seven altars, ver. 29, 30. Thus do they persevere in their expensive oblations, though they had no promise on which to build their hopes of speeding. Let not us therefore who have a promise, that the vision at the end shall speak and not lie, be discouraged by delays, but continue instant in prayer, and not faint, Luke xviii. 1.

CHAP. XXIV.

This chapter continues and concludes the history of the defeat of the counsels of Balak and Balaam against Israel, not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts; and as great an instance it is of God's power over the children of men, and his favour towards his own children, as any of the victories recorded in the book of the wars of the Lord. What preparation was made the third time, for the cursing of Israel, we read of in the close of the foregoing chapter. In this chapter we are told, 1. What the blessing was into which that intended curse was turned, ver. 1—9. 2. How Balak dismissed Balaam from his service thereupon, ver. 10—13. 3. The predictions Balaam left behind him concerning Israel, and some of the neighbour nations, ver. 14—25.

1. **A**ND when Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he went not as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness. 2. And Balaam lift up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding in his tents, according to their tribes: and the spirit of God came upon him. 3. And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open, hath said: 4. He hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open. 5. How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! 6. As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river side, as the trees of lign-aloes which the LORD hath planted, and as cedar-trees, beside the waters. 7. He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. 8. God brought him forth out of Egypt, he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows. 9. He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion, who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesteth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee.

The blessing itself which Balaam here pronounceth upon Israel, is much the same with the two we had in the foregoing chapter, but the introduction to it is different. 1. The method of proceeding here varies much in several instances. 1. Balaam laid aside the enchantments, he had hitherto depended on; used no spells, or charms, or magic arts, finding they did him no service; it was to no purpose to deal with the Devil for a curse when it was plain, God was determined immoveably to bless, ver. 1. Sooner or later God will convince men of their folly, in seeking after lying vanities which cannot profit. To what purpose should he seek for enchantments, he knew God was out of the reach of them. 2. He did not now retire into a solitary place, as before, but set his face directly towards the wilderness where Israel lay encamped; and since there is no remedy but they must be blessed, he will design nothing else, but will submit by compulsion. 3. Now the spirit of God came upon him, viz. the spirit of prophecy, as upon Saul to prevent him from taking David, 1 Sam. xix. 23. He spake not his own sense, but the language of the spirit that came upon him. 4. He used a different preface now from what he had used before, ver. 3, 4. much like that of David's, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1, 2, 3. yet favouring very much (as some think) of pride, and vain-glory, taking all the praise of this prophecy to himself, and magnifying himself as one of the cabinet-council of heaven. Two things he boasts of, 1. The favour God did him in making known himself to him. He heard the words of God, and saw the vision of the Almighty; God himself had met him, and spoken to him, chap. xxiii. 16. and this he is hugely puffed up with. Paul speaks with humility of his visions and revelations (2 Cor. xii. 1.) But Balaam speaks of them with pride. 2. His own power to receive and bear those revelations. He fell into a trance indeed, as other prophets did, but he had his eyes open. This he mentions twice; but the words in the original are not the same. The man whose eyes were shut, some think it may be read so, ver. 3. but now having his eyes open, ver. 4. when he had attempted to curse Israel, he owns himself in a mistake, but now he began to see his error; and yet still he remained blinded by covetousness and ambition, those foolish and hurtful lusts. Note, 1. Those that oppose God and his people, will sooner or later be made to see themselves wretchedly deceived. 2. Many have their eyes open that have not their hearts open; are enlightened, but not sanctified; and that knowledge which puffs men up with pride, will but serve to light them to hell, whither many go with their eyes open. 2. Yet the blessing is for substance the same with those before. Several things he admires in Israel. 1. Their beauty, ver. 5. *How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob.* Though they dwelt not in stately palaces, but in coarse and homely tents, and those no doubt sadly weather-beaten, yet Balaam sees a beauty in those tents, because of their admirable order, according to their tribes, ver. 2. Nothing recommends religion more to the good opinion of those that look upon it at a distance, than the unity and harmony of its professors, Psal. cxxxiii. 1. The amiableness of this people, and the great reputation they should gain among their neighbours, is compared (ver. 6.) to the beauty and sweetness of fruitful vallies, and fine gardens, flourishing trees, and fragrant spices. Note, Those whose eyes are open, see the saints on the earth to be excellent ones, and their delight is accordingly in them. The righteous doubtless is more excellent than his neighbour. They are true which the Lord has planted, that is their excellency. The branches of righteousness are the planting of the Lord. See Hos. xiv. 5, 6, 7. 2. Their fruitfulness and increase. This may be intended by those similitudes, ver. 6. of the vallies, gardens, and trees, as well as by those expressions, ver. 7. *He shall pour the water out of his buckets;*

buckets, i. e. God shall water them with his blessing like rain from heaven, and then his seed shall be in many waters: compare *Hof. ii. 23. I will sow her unto me in the earth.* And waters are in scripture put for peoples, and multitudes, and nations. This has been fulfilled in the wonderful increase of that nation, and their vast multitude even in their dispersion. 3. Their honour and advancement. As the multitude of the people is the honour of the prince, so the magnificence of the prince is the honour of the people; Balaam therefore foretels that his king shall be higher than Agag. Agag, it is probable, was the most potent monarch in those parts; Balaam knew of none more considerable than he, he topped the rest of his neighbours, but Balaam foretels that Israel's chief commander, who, after Moses, was Joshua, should be more great and honourable than ever Agag was, and make a far better figure in history. Saul their first king triumphed over Agag, though it is said, he came delicately. 4. Their power and victory, *ver. 8.* (1.) He looks back upon what they had done, or rather, what had been done for them. *God brought him forth out of Egypt,* this he had spoken of before, *chap. xxiii. 22.* The wonders that attended their deliverance out of Egypt contributed more to their honour, and the terror of their adversaries than any thing else, *Josh. ii. 10.* He that brought them out of Egypt, will not fail to bring them into Canaan, for as for God his work is perfect. (2.) He looks down upon their present strength. Israel hath as it were the strength of an unicorn; of which creature it is said, *Job xxxix. 9, 10. Will he be willing to serve thee, or abide thy crib? Canst thou bind him with his band in the furrow?* No, Israel is too powerful to be checked or held in by my curses, or thy armies. (3.) He looks forward to their future conquests. *He shall eat up the nations their enemies, i. e.* He shall not only destroy and devour them as easily and irresistibly as a lion doth his prey, but he shall himself be strengthened, and fatned, and enriched by their spoils. 5. Their courage and security, *ver. 9. He lay down as a lion, as a great lion.* Now he doth so, in the plains of Moab, and asks no leave of the king of Moab, nor is he in fear of him; shortly will he do so in Canaan, when he has torn his prey, he will take his repose, *quiet from the fear of evil,* and bid defiance to all his neighbours; for who shall stir up a sleeping lion? It is observed of lions, (as the learned bishop Patrick takes notice here) that they do not retire into places of shelter to sleep, but lie down any where, knowing that none dares meddle with them: thus secure was Israel in Canaan, chiefly in the days of David and Solomon; and thus is the *righteous bold as a lion,* *Prov. xxviii. 1.* not to assault others, but to repose themselves, because *God maketh them to dwell in safety,* *Psal. iv. 8.* 6. Their interest, and influence upon their neighbours. Their friends, and those in alliance with them were happy, *blessed is he that blesteth thee,* those that do them any kindness will certainly fare the better for it: but their enemies, and those in arms against them, were certainly miserable; *curst is he that curseth thee,* those that do them any injury it is at their peril: for God takes what is done to them, whether good or evil, as done to himself. Thus he confirms the blessing of Abraham, *Gen. xii. 3.* and speaks as if therefore he did at this time bless Israel, and not curse them, because he desired to share in the blessing of Israel's friends, and dreaded the curse on Israel's enemies.

10. ¶ And Balaks anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together: and Balak said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse mine enemies; and behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times. 11. Therefore now flee thou to thy place: I thought to promote thee unto great honour, but lo, the LORD hath kept thee back from honour. 12. And Balaam said unto Balak, Spake I not also to thy messengers which thou sentest unto me, saying, 13. If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the LORD, to do either good or bad of mine own mind; but what the LORD saith, that will I speak. 14. And now behold, I go unto my people: come therefore, and I will advertise thee, what these people shall do to thy people in the latter days.

We have here the conclusion of this vain attempt to curse Israel, and the letting of it fall. 1. Balak made the worst of it. He broke out into a rage against Balaam, *ver. 10.* expressed both in words and gesture the highest degree of vexation at the disappointment; he smote his hands together for indignation to see all his measures thus broke, and his project baffled. He charged Balaam with putting upon him the basest affront and cheat imaginable; *I called thee to curse mine enemies,* and thou hast shewed thyself in league with them and in their interests, for thou hast blessed them these three times; though by appointing the altars to be built and the sacrifice to be reared, thou madest me believe thou wouldst certainly curse them. Hereupon he forbid him his presence, expelled him his country, upbraided him with the preferments he had designed to have bestowed upon him, but now would not, *ver. 11. The Lord has kept thee back from honour.* See what thou gettest by pleasing the Lord, instead of pleasing me, thou hast

balked thy preferment by it. Thus they who are any way losers by their duty are commonly upbraided with it, as fools for preferring that before their interest in the world. Whereas, if Balaam had been voluntary and sincere in his adherence to the word of the Lord, though he left the honour Balak designed him by it, God would have made that loss up to him abundantly to his advantage. 2. Balaam made the best of it. (1.) He endeavours to excuse the disappointment. And a very good excuse he has for it, that God restrained him from saying what he would have said, and constrained him to say what he would not; and that this was what Balak ought not to be displeased at, not only because he could not help it, but because he had told Balak before what he must depend upon, *ver. 12, 13.* Balak could not say that he had cheated him, since he had given him fair notice of the check he found himself under. (1.) He endeavours to atone for it, *ver. 14.* Though he cannot do what Balak would have him do; yet, (1.) He will gratify his curiosity with some predictions concerning the nations about. It is natural to us to be pleased with prophecy, and with this he hopes to qualify the angry prince. (2.) He will satisfy him with an assurance that whatever this formidable people should do to his people, it should not be till the latter days, so that he for his part needed not to fear any mischief or molestation from them; the vision was for a great while to come, but in his days there should be peace. (3.) He will put him into a method of doing Israel a mischief without the ceremonies of enchantment and execration. This seems to be implied in that word, *I will advertise thee,* for it properly signifies, *I will counsel thee;* what the counsel was is not set down here, because it was given privately; but we are told afterwards what it was, *chap. xxxi. 16.* He counselled him to entice the Israelites to idolatry, *Rev. ii. 14.* Since he could not have leave from God to curse them, he puts them in a way of getting help from the Devil to tempt them, *Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo.*

15. ¶ And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open, hath said: 16. He hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: 17. I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. 18. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies, and Israel shall do valiantly. 19. Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city. 20. And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations, but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever. 21. And he looked on the Kenites; and took up his parable, and said, Strong is thy dwelling-place, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock. 22. Nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted, until Asshur shall carry thee away captive. 23. And he took up his parable, and said, Alas, who shall live when God doeth this! 24. And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also shall perish for ever. 25. And Balaam rose up, and went and returned to his place; and Balak also went his way.

The office of prophets was both to bless and to prophesy in the name of the Lord. Balaam, as a prophet, per force had blessed Israel, here he foretels future events. 1. His preface is much the same with that, *ver. 3, 4.* He personates a true prophet admirably well, God permitting and directing him to do so, because whatever he was, the prophecy itself was a true prophecy. He boasts, (1.) That his eyes are open, *ver. 15.* for prophets were in old time called Seers, 1 Sam. ix. 9. because they must speak what they had seen, and therefore before they opened their lips, it was necessary they should have their eyes open. (2.) That he had heard the words of God, which many do that do not heed them, nor hear God in them. (3.) That he knew the knowledge of the Most High; this is added here. A man may be full of the knowledge of God, and yet utterly destitute of the grace of God; may receive the truth in the light of it, and yet be a stranger to the love of it. (4.) That he saw the vision of the Almighty, but not so as to be changed into the same image. He calls God the Most High, and the Almighty, no man could speak more honourably of him, nor seem to put a greater value upon his acquaintance with him, and yet he had no true fear of him, love to him, or faith in him; so far may a man go towards heaven, and yet come short. 2. Here is his prophecy concerning him that should be the crown and glory of his people Israel; who is (1.) David in the type who not now, not quickly, but in process of time, should smite the corners of Moab, *ver. 17.* and take possession of Edom, and mount Seir, and under whom the forces of Israel should do valiantly, *ver. 18.* This

18. This was fulfilled when David smote Moab, and measured them with a line; so that the Moabites became Davids servants, 2 Sam. viii. 2. And at the same time the Edomites likewise were brought into obedience to Israel, ver. 14. But, (2.) Our Lord Jesus, the promised Messiah, is chiefly pointed at in the antitype, and of him it is an illustrious prophecy; it was the will of God that notice should thus be given of his coming; a great while before, not only to the people of the Jews, but to other nations, because his gospel and kingdom were to extend themselves so far beyond the borders of the land of Israel. It is here foretold; 1. That his coming should not be yet of a great while: *I shall see him, but not now.* I do see him in vision, but at a very great distance, through the interposing space of fifteen hundred years at least. Or understand it thus: Balaam, a wicked man shall see Christ, but shall not see him nigh; not see him as Job, who saw him as his redeemer, and saw him for himself, Job xix. 25, 27. When he comes in the clouds every eye shall see him, but many will see him (as the rich man in hell saw Abraham) afar off. 2. That he shall come out of Jacob, and Israel, as a star, and a sceptre; the former noting his glory and lustre, as the bright and morning star; the latter his power and authority; it is he that shall have dominion. Perhaps, this prophecy of Balaam (one of the children of the East) concerning a star that should arise out of Jacob, as the indication of a sceptre arising in Israel, being preserved by tradition in that country, gave occasion to the wise men who were of the East too, upon the sight of an unusual star over the land of Judea, to enquire for him that was born king of the Jews, Mat. ii. 2. 3. That his kingdom shall be universal, and victorious over all opposition; which was typified by David's victories over Moab and Edom. But the Messiah shall destroy, or as some read it, *shall rule over all the children of Seth*, ver. 17. i. e. all the children of men, which descend from Seth, the son of Adam; the descendants of all the rest of Adam's sons being cut off by the deluge. Christ shall be king not only of Jacob and Israel, but of all the world; so that all the children of Seth shall be either governed by his golden sceptre, or dashed in pieces by his iron rod. He shall set up an universal rule, authority, and power, of his own, and shall put down all opposing rule, 1 Cor. xv. 24. He shall unwall all the children of Seth; so some read it. He shall take down all their defences and carnal confidences, so as that they shall either admit his government, or lie open to his judgment. 4. That his Israel shall do valiantly, the subjects of Christ animated by his might, shall maintain a spiritual war with the powers of darkness, and be more than conquerors. *The people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits*, Dan. xi. 32. 3. Here is his prophecy concerning the Amalekites and Kenites, part of whose country it is probable he had now in view. (1.) The Amalekites were now the chief of the nations, ver. 20. therefore Agag was spoken of, ver. 7. as a topping prince, and they were the first that engaged Israel, when they came out of Egypt; but the time will come, when that nation, as great as it looks now, will be totally ruined, and routed out. *His latter end shall be, that he perish for ever.* Here Balaam confirms that doom of Amalek which Moses had read, *Exod. xvii. 14, 16.* Where God had sworn that he would have perpetual war with Amalek. Note, Those whom God is at war with, will certainly perish for ever; for when God judgeth, he will overcome. 2. The Kenites were now the securest of the nations; their situation was such, as that nature was their engineer, and had strongly fortified them; *thou puttest thy nest (like the eagle) in a rock*, ver. 21. Thou thinkest thy self safe, and yet the Kenite shall be wasted, ver. 22. and gradually brought to decay, till they be carried captive by the Assyrians, which was done at the captivity of the ten tribes. Note, Bodies politick, like natural bodies, though of the strongest constitution, will gradually decay, and come to ruin at last; even a nest in a rock will be no perpetual security. 4. Here is a prophecy that looks as forward as the Greeks and Romans, for theirs is supposed to be meant by the coast of Chittim, ver. 24. (1.) The introduction to this parable, this article of his prophecy is very observable, ver. 23. *Alas who shall live when God doth this?* Here he acknowledgeth all the revolutions of states and kingdoms to be the Lord's doing, *God doth this*; whoever are the instruments, he is the supreme director; but he speaks mournfully concerning them, and hath a very melancholy prospect of these events; *Who shall live?* Either, 1. These events are so distant, and so far off to come, that it is hard to say, *who shall live till they come.* But whoever shall live to see them there will be amazing turns. Or, 2. They will be so dismal, and make such desolations, that scarce any will escape, or be left alive, who shall live when death rides in triumph, *Rev. vi. 8.* They that live then will be as brands plucked out of the fire, and will have their lives given them as a prey. God fit us for the worst of times! (2.) The prophecy itself is observable. Both Greece and Italy lie much upon the sea, and therefore their armies were sent forth mostly in ships. Now he seems here to foretel, (1.) That the forces of the Grecians should humble and bring down the Assyrians, who were united with the Persians, which was fulfilled when the eastern country was overcome, or over-run rather, by Alexander. (2.) That theirs and the Roman forces should afflict the Hebrews, or Jews, who were called the children of Eber; this was fulfilled in part when the Grecian em-

pire was oppressive to the Jewish nation, but chiefly when the Roman empire ruined it, and put a period to it. But, (3.) That Chittim, that is, the Roman empire in which the Grecian was at length swallowed, should itself perish for ever, when the stone cut off the mountain without hand, shall consume all these kingdoms, and particularly the feet of iron and clay, Dan. ii. 34. Thus (saith Dr Lightfoot) Balaam instead of cursing the church curseth Amalek the first, and Rome the last enemy of the church. And so let all thine enemies perish O Lord!

C H A P. XXV.

Israel having escaped the curse of Balaam, here sustains a great deal of damage and reproach by the counsel of Balaam, who it seems before he left Balak, put him into a more effectual way than that which Balak thought of, to separate between the Israelites and their God. The Lord will not be prevailed with by Balaam's charms to ruin them; try if they will not be prevailed with by the charms of the daughters of Moab to ruin themselves. None are more fatally bewitched than those that are bewitched by their own lusts. Here is, 1. The sin of Israel; they were enticed by the daughters of Moab both to whoredom and to idolatry, ver. 1—3. 2. The punishment of this sin, by the hand of the magistrate, ver. 4, 5. And by the immediate hand of God, ver. 9. 3. The pious zeal of Phinehas in slaying Zimri and Cosbi, two impudent sinners, ver. 6, 8, 14, 15. 4. God's commendation of the zeal of Phinehas, ver. 19, 13. 5. Enmity put between the Israelites and the Midianites, their tempters, as at first between the woman and the serpent, ver. 16—18.

1. **A**ND Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. 2. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods: 3. And Israel joined himself unto Baal-Peor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel. 4. And the LORD said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the LORD against the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel. 5. And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men, that were joined unto Baal-Peor.

Here is, 1. The sin of Israel to which they were enticed, by the daughters of Moab and Midian; they were guilty both of corporal and spiritual whoredom, for *Israel joined himself unto Baal-Peor*, ver. 3. not all, nor the most, but very many were taken in this snare. Now concerning this observe, (1.) That Balak, by the advice of Balaam, cast this stumbling-block before the children of Israel, *Rev. ii. 14.* Note, Those are our worst enemies that draw us to sin, for that is the greatest mischief any man can do us. If Balak had drawn out his armed men against them to fight them, Israel had bravely resisted, and no doubt had been more than conquerors, but now he sends his beautiful women among them, and invites them to his idolatrous feasts, Israel basely yields, and is shamefully overcome; they are smitten with his whores that could not be smitten with the sword. Note, We are more in danger by the charms of a smiling world, than by the terrors of a frowning world. (2.) That the daughters of Moab were their tempters, and conquerors. Ever since Eve was first in the transgression, the fairer sex, though the weaker, has been a snare to many, yea strong men have been wounded and slain by the lips of the strange woman, *Prov. vii. 26.* witness Solomon whose wives were snares and nets to him, *Ecc. vii. 26.* (3.) That whoredom and idolatry went together. They first defiled and debauched their consciences by committing lewdness with the women, and then were easily drawn in complaisance to them, and in contempt of the God of Israel, to bow down to their idols. And the more likely to do so, if, as is commonly supposed, and seems probable by the joining of them together, the uncleanness committed was a part of the worship and service performed to Baal-Peor. Those that have broke the fences of modesty will never be held by the bonds of piety; and those that have dishonoured themselves by fleshly lusts, will not stick at dishonouring God by idolatrous worships, and for that are justly given up yet further to vile affections. (4.) That by eating of the idolatrous sacrifices they joined themselves to Baal-Peor to whom they were offered; which the apostle urgeth as a reason why Christians should not eat things offered to idols, because thereby they had fellowship with the devils to whom they were offered, 1 Cor. x. 20. It is called eating the sacrifices of the dead, *Psal. cvi. 28.* Not only because the idol itself was a dead thing, but because the person represented by it was some great hero, who since his death was deified, as saints in the Romish church are canonized. (5.) It was a great aggravation of the sin that *Israel abode in Shittim*, where they had the land of Canaan in view, and were just ready to enter and take possession of it. It was the highest degree of treachery and ingratitude to be false to their God, whom they had found so faithful to them, and to eat of idol-sacrifices when they were ready to be feasted so richly on God's favours. 2. God's just displeasure against

against them for this sin. Israel's whoredoms did that which all Balaam's enchantments could not do, they set God against them; now he was *turned to be their enemy, and fought against them*. So many of the people, nay so many of the princes, were guilty, that the sin became national, and for it God was wroth with the whole congregation.

1. A plague immediately broke out, for we read of the staying of it, *ver. 8.* and of the number that died of it, *ver. 9.* but no mention of the beginning of it, which therefore must be implied in those words, *ver. 3. The anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel.* It is said expressly, *Psal. cvi. 29. The plague brake in.* Note, Epidemical diseases are the fruits of God's anger, and the just punishments of epidemical sins; one infection follows the other. The plague no doubt fastened on those that were most

guilty, who were soon made to pay dear for their forbidden pleasures; and though now God doth not always plague such sinners as he did here, yet that word of God will be fulfilled, *If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy,* 1 Cor. iii.

2. The ring-leaders are ordered to be put to death by the hand of publick justice, which will be the only way to stay the plague, *ver. 4. Take the heads of the people,* i. e. of that part of the people, that went out of the camp of Israel into the country of Moab, to join in their idolatries; *Take them and hang them up before the sun,* as sacrifices to God's justice, and for terror to the rest of the people. The judges must first order them to be *slain with the sword,* *ver. 5.* and their dead bodies must be hanged up, that the stupid Israelites seeing their leaders and princes so severely punished for their whoredom and idolatry, without any regard to their quality, might be possessed with a sense of the evil of the sin, and the terror of God's wrath against them. Ring-leaders in sin, ought to be made examples of justice.

6. ¶ And behold one of the children of Israel came, and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman, in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who *were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.* 7. And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from amongst the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand; 8. And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel and the woman through her belly: so the plague was stayed from the children of Israel. 9. And those that died in the plague, were twenty and four thousand. 10. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 11. Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, (while he was zealous for my sake among them) that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. 12. Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace. 13. And he shall have it, and his seed after him, *even* the covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel. 14. Now the name of the Israelite that was slain, *even* that was slain with the Midianitish woman, was Zimri the son of Salu, a prince of a chief house among the Simeonites. 15. And the name of the Midianitish woman that was slain, was Cozbi the daughter of Zur, he was head over a people, and of a chief house in Midian.

Here is a remarkable contest between wickedness and righteousness, which shall be most bold and resolute; and righteousness carries the day, as no doubt it will at last. 1. Never was vice more daring than it was in Zimri; *a prince of a chief house* in the tribe of Simeon. Such a degree of impudence in wickedness was he arrived to, that he publickly appeared leading a Midianitish whore (and a whore of quality too like himself, a *daughter of a chief house* in Midian) in the sight of Moses and all the good people of Israel. He did not think it enough to go out with his harlot to worship the gods of Moab, but when he had done that, he brought her with him to dishonour the God of Israel. He not only owned her publickly, as his friend, and higher in his favour than any of the daughters of Israel, but openly went with her *into the tent,* *ver. 8.* The word signifies, such a booth, or place of retirement, as was designed and fitted up for lewdness. Thus he *declared his sin as Sodom,* and was so far from blushing for it, that he rather prided himself in it, and gloried in his shame. All the circumstances concurred to make it exceeding sinful, exceeding shameful. (1.) It was an affront to the justice of the nation, and bid defiance to that: the judges were ordered to put the criminals to death, but he thought himself too big for them to meddle with, and in effect bids them, touch him if they durst. He had certainly cast off all fear of God who stood in no awe of the powers which he had ordained to be a *terror to evil doers.* (2.) It was an affront to the religion of the nation, and put a contempt upon that. Moses and the main body of the

congregation, who kept their integrity were *weeping at the door of the tabernacle*; lamenting the sin committed, and deprecating the plague begun; they were *sanctifying a fast* in a solemn assembly, weeping *between the porch and the altar*, to turn away the wrath of God from the congregation, then comes Zimri among them with his whores in his hand to banter them, and in effect to tell them that he was resolved to fill the measure of sin, as fast as they emptied it. 2. Never was virtue more daring than it was in Phinehas. Being aware of the insolence of Zimri, which it is likely all the congregation took notice of, in a holy indignation at the offenders, he rises up from his prayers, takes his sword or half-pike, follows those impudent sinners into their tent, and stabs them both, *ver. 7. 8.* It is not at all difficult to justify Phinehas in what he did; for being now heir apparent to the high-priesthood, no doubt, he was one of those judges of Israel, whom Moses had ordered, by the divine appointment, to slay all those whom they knew to have joined themselves to Baal-Peor; so that this gives no countenance at all to private persons under pretence of zeal against sin to put offenders to death, who ought to be prosecuted by due course of law. The civil magistrate is the avenger to *execute wrath upon him that doth evil*, and no private person may take his work out of his hand.

Two ways God testified his acceptance of the pious zeal of Phinehas. 1. He immediately put a stop to the plague. *ver. 8.* Their weeping and praying prevailed not, till this piece of necessary justice was done. If magistrates do not take care to punish sin, God will; but their justice will be the best prevention of his judgment, as in the case of Achan, *Josh. vii. 13.* 2. He an honour upon Phinehas: tho' he do no more than was his duty to do as a judge, yet because he did it with extraordinary zeal against sin, and for the honour of God and Israel, and did it when the other judges, out of respect to Zimri's character, as a prince, were afraid, and declined doing it; therefore God shewed himself particularly well pleased with him, and it was *counted to him for righteousness*, *Psal. cvi. 31.* There is nothing lost, by venturing for God. If Zimri's relations bore him a grudge for it, and his friends might censure him as indiscreet, in this violent and hasty execution, what needed he care while God accepted him? In a good thing we should be zealously affected. (1.) Phinehas, upon this occasion, though a young man, is pronounced his country's patriot, and best friend, *ver. 11.* He has *turned away my wrath from the children of Israel.* So much doth God delight in shewing mercy, that he was well-pleased with those that are instrumental in turning away his wrath; this is the best service we can do to our people; and we may contribute something towards it by our prayers, and by our endeavours in our places, to *bring the wickedness of the wicked to an end.* (2.) The priesthood is entailed by covenant upon his family: It was designed him before, but now it was confirmed to him, and which added much to the comfort and honour of it, it was made the recompence of his pious zeal, *ver. 12, 13.* It is here called an *everlasting priesthood*, because it should continue to the period of the Old Testament dispensation, and should then have its perfection and perpetuity in the unchangeable priesthood of Christ, who is *consecrated for evermore.* By the *covenant of peace* given him, some understand in general a promise of long life and prosperity, and all good; it seems rather to be meant particularly of the covenant of priesthood, for that is called the covenant of life and peace, *Mal. ii. 5.* and was made for the preserving of peace between God and his people. Observe, how the reward answered the service, by executing justice he had *made an atonement for the children of Israel,* *ver. 13.* and therefore he and his shall from henceforward be employed in making atonement by sacrifice. He *was zealous for his God,* and therefore he shall have the covenant of an *everlasting priesthood.* Note, It is requisite that ministers should be not only for God, but zealous for God. It is required of them, that they do more than others for the support and advancement of the interests of God's kingdom among men.

16. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 17. Vex the Midianites, and smite them: 18. For they vex you with their wives, wherewith they have beguiled you, in the matter of Peor, and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a prince of Midian their sister, which was slain in the day of the plague, for Peors sake.

God had punished the Israelites for their sin with a plague, as a father he corrected his own children with a rod, but we read not that any of the Midianites died of the plague, God took another course with them, and punished them with the sword of an enemy, not with the rod of a father. (1.) Moses, though the meekest man, and far from a spirit of revenge, is bid to *vex the Midianites and smite them,* *ver. 17.* Note, We must set ourselves against that, whatever it is, which is an occasion of sin to us, though it be a right eye, or a right hand, that thus offends us, *Matth. v. 29, 30.* This is that holy indignation and revenge which godly sorrow worketh, 2 Cor. vii. 11. (2.) The reason given for the meditating of this revenge is, because they *vex you with their wives;* *ver. 18.* Note, Whatever draws us to sin, should be vexation to us, as a thorn in the flesh. The mischief which the Midianites

Midianites did to Israel in enticing them to whoredom, must be remembered and revenged with as much severity, as that which the Amalekites did in fighting with them, when they came out of Egypt, *Exod. xvii. 14.* God will certainly reckon with those that do the Devil's work in tempting men to sin, especially those that make Israel to sin. See further orders given in this matter, *chap. xxxi. 2.*

C H A P. XXVI.

This book is called Numbers, from the numbring of the children of Israel; which it gives an account of. Once they were numbred at mount Sinai, in the first year after they came out of Egypt, which we had an account of, chap. i. and ii. And now a second time they were numbred in the plains of Moab, just before they entered Canaan, and that we have an account of in this chapter. 1. Orders are given for the doing of it, ver. 1—4. 2. A register of the families, and numbers of each tribe, ver. 5—50. and the sum total, ver. 51. 3. Direction given to divide the land among them, ver. 52—56. 4. The families and numbers of the Levites by themselves, ver. 57—62. 5. Notice is taken of the fulfilling of the threatening in the death of all those that were first numbred, ver. 63—65. and to this there seems to have been a special regard in the taking and keeping of this account.

1. **A**ND it came to pass after the plague, that the LORD spake unto Moses, and unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying, 2. Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and upwards, throughout their fathers house, of all that are able to go to war in Israel. 3. And Moses and Eleazar the priest spake with them in the plains of Moab, by Jordan, near Jericho, saying, 4. Take the sum of the people, from twenty years old and upwards; as the LORD commanded Moses and the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt.

Observe here, 1. That Moses did not number the people, but when God commanded him. David in his time did it without a command, and paid dear for it. God was Israel's king, and he would not have this act of authority done, but by his express orders. Moses perhaps by this time had heard of the blessing, with which Balaam was constrained, fore against his will, to bless Israel, and particularly the notice he took of their numbers, and is sufficiently pleased with that general testimony born to this instance of their strength and honour by an adversary, though he knows not their numbers exactly, till God now appoints him to take the sum of them. 2. Eleazar is joined in commission with him, as Aaron had been before, by which God honoured Eleazar before the elders of his people, and confirmed his succession. 3. It was presently after the plague, that this account was ordered to be taken; to shew, that though God had in justice contended with them by that sweeping pestilence, yet he had not made a full end, nor would he utterly cast them off. God's Israel shall not be ruined, though it be severely rebuked. 4. They were now to go by the same rule, they had gone by in the former numbring, counting those only that were able to go forth to war, for that was the service now before them.

5. ¶ Reuben the eldest son of Israel: the children of Reuben; Hanoch, of whom cometh the family of the Hanochites: of Pallu, the family of the Pallutites: 6. Of Hefron, the family of the Hefronites: of Carmi, the family of the Carmites. 7. These are the families of the Reubenites: and they that were numbred of them were forty and three thousand and seven hundred and thirty. 8. And the sons of Pallu; Eliab. 9. And the sons of Eliab; Nemuel, and Dathan, and Abiram. This is that Dathan and Abiram which were famous in the congregation, who strove against Moses and against Aaron in the company of Korah, when they strove against the LORD: 10. And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men: and they became a sign. 11. Notwithstanding, the children of Korah died not. 12. ¶ The sons of Simeon after their families: of Nemuel, the family of the Nemuelites: of Jamin, the family of the Jaminites: of Jachin, the family of the Jachinites: 13. Of Zerah, the family of the Zarahites, of Shaul, the family of the Shaulites. 14. These are the families of the Simeonites: twenty and two thousand and two hundred. 15. ¶ The children of Gad, after their families: of Zephon, the family of the Ze-

phonites: of Haggi, the family of the Haggites: of Shuni, the family of the Shunites: 16. Of Ozni, the family of the Oznites: of Eri, the family of the Erites: 17. Of Arod, the family of the Arodites: of Areli, the family of the Arelites. 18. These are the families of the children of Gad, according to those that were numbred of them, forty thousand and five hundred. ¶ 19. The sons of Judah were Er and Onan: and Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. 20. And the sons of Judah after their families were; of Shelah, the family of the Shelanites: of Pharez, the family of the Pharezites: of Zerah, the family of the Zarahites: 21. And the sons of Pharez were; of Hefron, the family of the Hefronites: of Hamul, the family of the Hamulites. 22. These are the families of Judah, according to those that were numbred of them, threescore and sixteen thousand and five hundred. 23. ¶ Of the sons of Issachar, after their families: of Tola, the family of the Tolaites: of Pua, the family of the Punites: 24. Of Jashub, the family of the Jashubites: of Shimron, the family of the Shimronites. 25. These are the families of Issachar, according to those that were numbred of them, threescore and four thousand and three hundred. 26. ¶ Of the sons of Zebulun, after their families: Of Sered, the family of the Sardites: of Elon, the family of the Elonites: of Jahleel, the family of the Jahleelites. 27. These are the families of the Zebulunites, according to those that were numbred of them, threescore thousand and five hundred. 28. ¶ The sons of Joseph after their families were Manasseh and Ephraim. 29. Of the sons of Manasseh: of Machir, the family of the Machirites: and Machir begat Gilead: of Gilead cometh the family of the Gileadites. 30. These are the sons of Gilead: of Jeezer, the family of the Jeezerites: of Helek, the family of the Helekites: 31. And of Asriel, the family of the Asrielites: and of Shechem, the family of the Shechemites: 32. And of Shemida, the family of the Shemidaites: and of Hephher, the family of the Hephherites. 33. ¶ And Zelophehad the son of Hephher had no sons, but daughters: and the names of the daughters of Zelophehad, were Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milchah, and Tirzah. 34. These are the families of Manasseh, and those that were numbred of them, fifty and two thousand and seven hundred. 35. ¶ These are the sons of Ephraim, after their families: of Shuthelah, the family of the Shuthalhites: of Bechar, the family of the Bachrites: of Tahan, the family of the Tahanites. 36. And these are the sons of Shuthelah: of Eran, the family of the Eranites: 37. These are the families of the sons of Ephraim, according to those that were numbred of them, thirty and two thousand and five hundred. These are the sons of Joseph, after their families. 38. ¶ The sons of Benjamin after their families: of Bela, the family of the Belaïtes: of Ashbel, the family of the Ashbelites: of Ahiham, the family of the Ahihamites: 39. Of Shupham, the family of the Shuphamites: of Hupham, the family of the Huphamites. 40. And of the sons of Bela were Ard and Naaman: of Ard, the family of the Ardites: and of Naaman, the family of the Naamites. 41. These are the sons of Benjamin after their families: and they that were numbred of them, were forty and five thousand and six hundred. 42. ¶ These are the sons of Dan after their families: of Shuham, the family of the Shuhamites. These are the families of Dan after their families. 43. All the families of the Shuhamites, according to those that were numbred of them, were threescore and four thousand and four hundred. 44. ¶ Of the children of Asher after their families: of Jimna, the family of the Jimnites: of Jesui, the family of the Jesuites: of Beriah, the family of the Berities. 45. Of the sons of Beriah: of Heber, of the family of the Heberites: of Malchiel, the family of the Malchielites. 46. And the name of the daughter of Asher, was Sarah. 47. These are the families of the sons of Asher, according to those that were numbred of them, were fifty and three thousand and four hundred. 48. Of the sons of Naphtali after their families: of Jahzeel, the family of the Jahzeelites: of Guni, the family of the Gunites: 49. Of Jezer, the family of the Jezerites: of Shillem, the family of the Shillemites. 50. These

50. These are the families of Naphtali, according to their families: and they that were numbred of them, were forty and five thousand and four hundred. 51. These were the numbred of the children of Israel, six hundred thousand, and a thousand seven hundred and thirty.

This is the register of the tribes as they were now enrolled, in the same order that they were numbred, chap. 1. Observe, 1. The account that is here kept of the families of each tribe; which must not be understood of such as we call families, those that live in a house together, but such as were the descendents of the several sons of the patriarchs, by whose names, in honour of them, their posterity distinguished themselves, and one another. The families of the twelve tribes are thus numbred; of Dan but one, for Dan had but one son, and yet that tribe was the most numerous of all, except Judah, ver. 42, 43. Its beginning was small, but its latter end greatly increased; Zebulun was divided into three families; Ephraim into four; Issachar into four; Naphtali into four; and Reuben into four; Judah, Simeon, and Asher, had five families apiece. Gad and Benjamin seven apiece; and Manasseh eight. Benjamin brought ten sons into Egypt, Gen. xvi. 21. but three of them it seems either died childless, or their families were extinct, for here we find seven only of those names preserved, and that whole tribe none of the most numerous. For Providence in the building up of families and nations, doth not tie it self to probabilities. *The barren hath born seven, and she that hath many children is waxed feeble*, 1 Sam. ii. 5. 2. The numbers of each tribe. And here our best entertainment will be to compare those numbers, with those when they were numbred at mount Sinai. The sum total was very near the same; they were now one thousand eight hundred and twenty fewer than they were then; yet seven of the tribes increased in number. Judah increased one thousand nine hundred. Issachar nine thousand nine hundred. Zebulun three thousand one hundred. Manasseh twenty thousand five hundred. Benjamin ten thousand two hundred. Dan one thousand seven hundred. Asher eleven thousand nine hundred. But the other five decreased more than to balance that increase. Reuben decreased two thousand seven hundred and seventy. Simeon thirty-seven thousand one hundred. Gad one thousand one hundred and fifty. Ephraim eight thousand. And Naphtali eight thousand. In which account we may observe, (1.) That all the three tribes that were encamped under the standard of Judah, who was the ancestor of Christ, were increased, for his church shall be edified and multiplied. (2.) That none of the tribes increased so much as that of Manasseh, which in the former account was the smallest of all the tribes, but thirty-two thousand two hundred; but here is one of the most considerable; and his brother Ephraim, which there was numerous, is here one of the least. Jacob had crossed hands upon their heads, and had preferred Ephraim before Manasseh, which perhaps the Ephraimites had prided themselves too much in, and had trampled upon their brethren the Manassites; but when the Lord saw that Manasseh was despised, he thus multiplied him exceedingly, for it is his glory to help the weakest, and raise up them that are cast down. (3.) That none of the tribes decreased so much as Simeon did; from fifty nine thousand three hundred, it sunk to twenty-two thousand two hundred; almost to but a third part of what it was. One whole family of that tribe, (*viz.* Ohad, mentioned Exod. vi. 15.) was extinct in the wilderness. Hence, Simeon is not mentioned in Moses's blessing, Deut. xxxiii. and the lot of that tribe in Canaan was inconsiderable, only a canton out of Judah's lot, Josh. xix. 9. Some conjecture that most of those twenty-four thousand which were cut off by the plague for the iniquity of Peor were of that tribe, for Zimri, who was a ring-leader in that iniquity was a prince of that tribe, many of which therefore were influenced by his example to follow his pernicious ways. 3. In the account of the tribe of Reuben, mention is made of the rebellion of Dathan and Abiram, who were of that tribe, in confederacy with Korah a Levite, ver. 9, 10, 11. Though the story had been largely related but a few chapters before, yet here it comes in again, as fit to be had in remembrance, and thought of by posterity, whenever they looked into their pedigree, and pleased themselves with the antiquity of their families, and the glory of their ancestors, that they might call themselves a seed of evil doers. Two things are here said of them, (1.) That they had been famous in the congregation, ver. 9. Probably, they were remarkable for their ingenuity and activity, and fitness for business; that Dathan and Abiram, that might have been advanced in due time under God and Moses, but their ambitious spirits put them upon striving against God and Moses, and when they quarrelled with the one they quarrelled with the other. And what was the issue? (2.) They that might have been famous were made infamous; they became a sign, ver. 10. They were made monuments of divine justice, God in their ruin shewed himself glorious in holiness; and so they were set up for warning to all others in all ages, to take heed of treading in the steps of their pride and rebellion. Notice is here taken of the preservation of the children of Korah, ver. 11. they died not; as the children of Dathan and Abiram did; doubtless because they kept themselves pure from the infection, and would not join, no, not with their own father in rebellion. If we partake not of the sins of sinners, we shall not partake of their plagues. These sons of Korah were afterwards in their posterity eminently serviceable to the church, being employed by David as singers in the house of the Lord; hence many Psalms are said to be for the sons of Korah: and perhaps they were made to bear his name so long after, rather than the name of any other of their ancestors for warning to themselves, and as an instance of the power of God, which brought those choice fruits, even out of that bitter root. The children of families that have been stigmatized, should endeavour by their eminent virtues, to roll away the reproach of their fathers.

52. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses saying, 53. Unto these the land shall be divided for an inheritance, according to the number of names. 54. To many thou shalt give the more inheritance, and to few thou shalt give the less inheritance: to every one shall his inheritance be given, according to those that were numbred of him. 55. Notwithstanding, the land shall be divided by lot: according to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit. 56. According to the lot shall the possession thereof be divided between many and few.

If any ask why such a particular account is kept of the tribes and families, and numbers of the people of Israel, here is an answer for them; as they were multiplied, so they were portioned, not by common providence, but by promise; and for the support of the honour of divine revelation, God will have the fulfilling of the promise taken notice of both in their increase, and in their inheritance. When Moses had numbred the people, God doth not say, *By these shall the land be conquered*, but taking that for granted, he tells him, *Unto these shall the land be divided*. These that are now registered as the sons of Israel shall be admitted (as it were by copy of court-roll) heirs of the land of Canaan.

Now in the distributing, or quartering, of these tribes, 1. The general rule of equity is here prescribed to Moses, that to many he should give more, and to few he should give less (*ver.* 54.) yet, alas, he was so far from giving any to others, that he must not have any himself; but this direction given to him was intended for Joshua his successor. 2. The application of this general rule was to be determined by lot, ver. 55. notwithstanding it seems thus to be left to the prudence of their prince, yet the matter must be finally reserved to the providence of their God, in which they must all acquiesce, how much soever it contradicted their policies or inclinations, *According to the lot shall the possession be divided*. As the God of nations, so the God of Israel in particular reserves it to himself to appoint the bounds of our habitation. And thus Christ, our Joshua, when he was urged to appoint one of his disciples to his right hand, and another to his left in his kingdom, acknowledged the sovereignty of his Father in the disposal; *It is not mine to give*, Joshua must not dispose of inheritances in Canaan according to his own mind, *but it shall be given to them, for whom it is prepared of my Father*.

57. ¶ And these are they that were numbred of the Levites after their families: of Gershon, the family of the Gershonites: of Kohath, the family of the Kohathites: of Merari, the family of the Merarites. 58. These are the families of the Levites: the family of the Libnites, the family of the Hebronites, the family of the Mahlites, the family of the Mushites, the family of the Korathites: and Kohath begat Amram. 59. And the name of Amrams wife, was Jochebed the daughter of Levi, whom her mother bare to Levi in Egypt: and she bare unto Amram, Aaron and Moses, and Miriam their sister. 60. And unto Aaron was born Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 61. And Nadab and Abihu died, when they offered strange fire before the LORD. 62. And those that were numbred of them, were twenty and three thousand, all males from a month old and upward: for they were not numbred among the children of Israel, because there was no inheritance given them among the children of Israel.

Levi was God's tribe; a tribe that was to have no inheritance with the rest in the land of Canaan, and therefore was not numbred with the rest, but by itself; so it had been numbred in the beginning of this book at mount Sinai, and therefore came not under the sentence passed upon all that were then numbred, that none of them should enter Canaan, but Caleb and Joshua; for of the Levites that were not numbred with them, nor were to go forth to war, there were Eleazar and Ithamar, and perhaps others, who were above twenty years old then (as appears Numb. iv. 16, 28.) entered Canaan; and yet this tribe now at its second numbering was increased but one thousand; and

and was still one of the smallest tribes. Mention is made here of the death of Nadab and Abihu for offering strange fire, as before of the sin and punishment of Korah, because *these things happened unto them for ensamples.*

63. ¶ These are they that were numbred by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who numbred the children of Israel in the plains of Moab, by Jordan near Jericho. 64. But among these there was not a man of them whom Moses and Aaron the priest numbred, when they numbred the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. 65. For the LORD had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness: and there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.

That which is observable in this conclusion of the account is, the execution of the sentence passed upon the murmurers, *Numb. xiv. 29.* That not one of those who were numbred from twenty years old and upward, (and that the Levites were not, but either from a month old, or from thirty years old to fifty) should enter Canaan, except Caleb and Joshua. In the muster now made, particular directions, no doubt, were given to those of each tribe, that were employed in taking the account, to compare these rolls with the former, and to observe whether there were any now left of those that were numbred at mount Sinai, and it appeared that there was not one man numbred now, that was numbred then, but Caleb and Joshua, *ver. 64, 65.* Herein appeared, 1. The righteousness of God, and his faithfulness to his threatnings, when once the decree is gone forth. He swore in his wrath, and what he had sworn he performed. Better all those carcasses, had they been ten times as many, should fall to the ground than the word of God. Though the rising generation was mixed with them, and many of the guilty and condemned criminals long survived the sentence, even to the last year of the forty, yet they were cut off by some means or other before this muster was made: those whom God has condemned cannot escape, either by losing themselves in a crowd, or by the delay of execution. 2. The goodness of God to this people notwithstanding their provocations; though that murmuring race was cut off, yet God raised up another generation, which was upon the matter as numerous as they, that though they perished, yet the name of Israel might not be cut off, lest the inheritance of the promise should be lost for want of heirs. And though the number fell a little short of what it was at mount Sinai, yet those now numbred had this advantage, that they were all middle-aged men, between twenty and sixty, in the prime of their time for service: and during the thirty-eight years of their wandering, and wasting in the wilderness, they had opportunity of acquainting themselves with the laws and ordinances of God, having no business civil or military to divert them from those sacred studies: and having Moses and Aaron to instruct them, and God's good Spirit, *Neb. ix. 10.* 3. The truth of God, in performing his promise made to Caleb and Joshua. They were to be preserved from falling in this common ruin, and they were so. The arrows of death, though they fly in the dark, they do not fly at random, even when they fly thickest, but are directed to the mark intended, and no other. All that are written among the living shall have their lives given them for a prey, in the most dangerous times. Thousands may fall on their right hand, and ten thousand on their left, but they shall escape.

C H A P. XXVII.

Here is, 1. The case of Zelophehad's daughters determined, *ver. 1—11.* 2. Notice given to Moses of his death approaching, *ver. 12—14.* Provision made of a successor in the government. 1. By the prayer of Moses, *ver. 15—17.* 2. By the appointment of God, *ver. 18—23.*

1. **T**HEN came the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh, the son of Joseph; and these are the names of his daughters, Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah. 2. And they stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes, and all the congregations, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, 3. Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves together against the LORD in the company of Korah: but died in his own sin, and had no sons. 4. Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? give unto us therefore a possession among the brethren of our father. 5. And Moses brought their cause before

the LORD. 6. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 7. The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their fathers brethren, and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them. 8. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter. 9. And if he have no daughter, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his brethren. 10. And if he have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his fathers brethren. 11. And if his father have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his kinsman, that is next to him of his family, and he shall possess it: and it shall be unto the children of Israel a statute of judgment, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Mention was made of the case of these daughters of Zelophehad, in the chapter before, *ver. 33.* It should seem by the particular notice taken of it, that it was a singular case, and that the like did not at this time occur in all Israel, that the head of a family had no sons but daughters only; their case is again debated, *chap. xxxvi.* upon another article of it; and according to the judgments given in their case we find them put in possession, *Jesh. xvii. 3.* One would think their personal character was such as added weight to their case, and made it to be so often taken notice of. Here is, 1. Their case stated by themselves, and their petition upon it presented to the highest court of judicature, which consisted of Moses as king, the princes as lords, and the congregation, or elders of the people, who were chosen their representatives, as the commons, *ver. 2.* This august assembly sat near the door of the tabernacle, that in difficult cases they might consult the oracle. To them these young ladies made their application; for it is the duty of magistrates to defend the fatherless, *Psal. lxxxii. 3.* We find not that they had any advocate to speak for them, but they managed their own cause ingeniously enough, which they could do the better, because it was plain and honest, and spoke for itself.

Now observe, 1. What it is they petition for: that they might have a possession in the land of Canaan among the brethren of their father, *ver. 4.* What God had said to Moses, *chap. xxvi. 53.* he had faithfully made known to the people, that the land of Canaan was to be divided among those that were now numbred; these daughters knew they were not numbred, and therefore by this rule must expect no inheritance, and the family of their father must be looked upon as extinct, and written childless, though he had all these daughters: this they thought hard, and therefore prayed to be admitted heirs to their father, and to have an inheritance in his right. If they had had a brother they would not have applied to Moses (as one did to Christ, *Luke xii. 13.*) for an order to inherit with him. But having no brother they beg for a possession. Herein they discovered, (1.) A strong faith in the power and promise of God, concerning the giving of the land of Canaan to Israel. Though it was yet unconquered, untouched, and in the full possession of the natives, yet they petition for their share in it, as if it were all their own already. See *Psal. lx. 6, 7.* God hath spoken in his holiness, and then Gilead is mine, Manasseh is mine. (2.) An earnest desire of a place and name in the land of promise, which was a type of heaven; and if they had, as some think, an eye to that, and by this claim laid hold on eternal life, they were five wise virgins indeed; and their example should quicken us with all possible diligence to make sure our title to the heavenly inheritance, in the disposal of which, by the covenant of grace, no difference is made between male and female, *Gal. iii. 28.* (3.) A true respect and honour for their father, whose name was dear and precious to them now he was gone, and they were therefore solicitous that it should not be done away from among his family. There is a debt which children owe to the memory of their parents, required by the fifth commandment; Honour thy father and mother. 2. What their plea is; That their father did not die under any attainder which might be thought to have corrupted his blood, and forfeited his estate, but he died in his own sin, *ver. 3.* not engaged in any mutiny or rebellion against Moses, particularly not in that of Korah, and his company, nor any way concerned in the sins of others, but chargeable only with the common iniquities of mankind, for which to his own master he was to stand or fall, but laid not himself open to any judicial process before Moses and the princes. He was never convicted of any thing that might be a bar to his children's claim. It is a comfort to parents when they come to die, if that though they smart themselves for their own sin, yet they are not conscious to themselves of any of those iniquities which God visits upon the children.

2. Their case determined by the divine oracle. Moses not daring to give judgment himself, because though their pretensions seemed just and reasonable, yet his express orders were to divide the land among those that were numbred, which were the males only; therefore brings their cause before the Lord, and waits for his decision, *ver. 5.* and God himself gives judgment upon it. He takes cognizance

zance of the affairs not only of nations, but of private families, and orders them in judgment, according to the counsel of his own will. (1.) The petition is granted, *ver. 7. They speak right, give them a possession.* Those that seek an inheritance in the land of promise shall have what they seek for, and *other things shall be added to them.* Those are claims which God will countenance and crown. (2.) The point is settled for hereafter. These daughters of Zelophehad consulted not only their own comfort, and the credit of their family, but the honour and happiness of their sex likewise; for on this particular occasion a general law was made, that in case a man had no son, his estate should go to his daughters, *ver. 8.* Not to the eldest, as the eldest son, but to them all in copartnership, share and share like. Those that in such a case deprive their daughters of their right, purely to keep up the name of their family, unless a valuable consideration be allowed them, may make the entail of their lands surer than the entail of a blessing with them. Further directions are given for the disposal of inheritances, *ver. 9, 10, 11.* That if a man have no issue at all, his estate shall go to his brethren, if no brethren, then to his fathers brethren; and if there be no such, then to his next kinsman; with this the rules of our law exactly agree; and though the Jewish doctors here will have it understood, that if a man have no children his estate shall go to his father if living, before his brethren, yet there is nothing of that in the law, and our common law has an express rule against it; That an estate cannot ascend lineally, so that if a son purchase lands in fee-simple, and die without issue in the life-time of his father, his father cannot be his heir. See how *God makes heirs,* and in his disposal we must acquiesce.

12. ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Get thee up into this mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel. 13. And when thou hast seen it, thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered. 14. For ye rebelled against my commandment (in the desert of Zin, in the strife of the congregation) to sanctify me at the water before their eyes: that is the water of Meribah in Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.

Here, 1. God tells Moses of his faults; his speaking unadvisedly with his lips at the Waters of Strife, where he did not express so carefully as he ought to have done a regard to the honour both of God and Israel, *ver. 14.* Though Moses was a servant of the Lord, a faithful servant, yet once he rebelled against God's commandment, and failed in his duty; and though a very honourable servant, and highly favoured, yet he shall hear of his miscarriage, and all the world shall hear of it too again and again; for God will shew his displeasure against sin, even in those that are nearest and dearest to him. Those that are in reputation for wisdom and honour have need to be constantly careful of their words and ways, lest at any time they say or do that which may be a diminution either to their comfort or to their credit, or both, a great while after. 2. He tells Moses of his death; his death was the punishment of his sin, and yet notice is given him of it in such a manner as might best serve to sweeten and mollify the sentence, and reconcile him to it. 1. Moses must die, but he shall first have the satisfaction of seeing the land of promise, *ver. 14.* God did not intend with this sight of Canaan to tantalize him, or upbraid him with his folly in doing that which cut him short of it, nor had it any impression of that kind upon him, but God appointed it, and Moses accepted it as a favour; his sight (we have reason to think) being wonderfully strengthened and enlarged to take such a full and distinct view of it as did abundantly gratify his innocent curiosity. This sight of Canaan signified his believing prospect of the better country, that is the heavenly, which is very comfortable to dying saints. 2. Moses must die, but death doth not cut him off, it only gathers him to his people, brings him to rest with the holy patriarchs that were gone before him; Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, were his people, the people of his choice and love, and to them death gathered him. 3. Moses must die, but only as Aaron died before him, *ver. 13.* And Moses had seen how easily and cheerfully Aaron had put off the priesthood first, and then the body: let not Moses therefore be afraid of dying, it was but to be gathered to his people, as Aaron was gathered. Thus the death of our near and dear relations should be improved by us, (1.) As an engagement to us to think oft of dying; we are not better than our fathers or brethren, if they are gone, we are going; if they are gathered already, we must be gathered very shortly. (2.) As an encouragement to us to think of death without terror, and even to please our selves with the thoughts of it; it is but to die as such and such died, if we live as they lived, and their end was peace; they finished their course with joy; why then should we fear any evil in that melancholy valley.

15. ¶ And Moses spake unto the LORD, saying, 16. Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, 17. Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in, that

the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd. 18. ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him. 19. And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. 20. And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. 21. And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him, after the judgment of Urim before the LORD: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation. 22. And Moses did as the LORD commanded him: and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation. 23. And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.

Here, 1. Moses prays for a successor. When God had told him he must die, though it appears elsewhere he solicited for a reprieve for himself, *Deut. iii. 24.* yet when that could not be obtained, he begged earnestly that the work of God might be carried on, though he might not have the honour of finishing it. Envious spirits do not love their successors, but Moses was none of those. We should concern our selves both in our prayers and in our endeavours for the rising generation, that religion may flourish, and the interests of God's kingdom among men may be maintained and advanced when we are in our graves. In this prayer Moses expresseth, (1.) A tender concern for the people of Israel, *that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd.* Our Saviour useth this comparison in his compassions for the people, when they wanted good ministers, *Mat. ix. 6.* Magistrates and ministers are the shepherds of a people, if those be wanting, or are not as they should be, people are apt to wander and be scattered abroad, are exposed to enemies, in danger of wanting food, and of hurting one another, *as sheep having no shepherd.* (2.) A believing dependence upon God, as the *God of the spirits of all flesh.* He is both the former and the searcher of spirits, and therefore can either find men fit or make them fit to serve his purposes, for the good of his church. He prays to God not to send an angel, but to set a man over the congregation, i. e. to nominate and appoint one whom he would qualify and own, as ruler of his people Israel. Before God gave this blessing to Israel, he stirred up Moses to pray for it: thus Christ before he sent forth his apostles, called to those about him, *to pray the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest,* *Matth. ix. ult.*

2. God in answer to his prayer appoints him a successor, even Joshua, who had long since signalized himself for his courage in fighting Amalek, his humility in ministering to Moses, and his faith and sincerity in witnessing against the report of the evil spies: this is the man God pitches upon to succeed Moses. *A man in whom is the spirit, the spirit of grace;* he is a good man, fearing God and hating covetousness, and acting from a principle; the *spirit of government,* he is fit to do the work and discharge the trusts of his place; a spirit of conduct and courage; and he had also the *spirit of prophecy,* for the Lord often spake unto him, *Josh. iv. 1—vi. 2.—vii. 10.* Now here, 1. God directs Moses how to secure the succession to Joshua. (1.) He must ordain him; *lay thine hand upon him.* This was done in token of Moses's transferring the government to him, as the laying of hands on the sacrifice put the offering in the place and stead of the offerer; also in token of God's conferring the blessing of the Spirit upon him, which Moses obtained by prayer. It is said, *Deut. xxxiv. 9. Joshua was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him.* This rite of imposing hands we find used in the New Testament in setting apart of gospel ministers, noting a solemn designation of them to the office, and an earnest desire that God would qualify them for it, and own them in it. It is the offering of them to Christ and his church for living sacrifices. (2.) He must represent him to Eleazar and the people; set him before them, that they might know him to be designed of God for this great trust, and consent to that designation. (3.) He must give him a charge. *He must be charged with the people of Israel,* who were delivered into his hand as sheep into the hand of a shepherd, and of whom he must be accountable: he must be strictly charged to do his duty to them; though they were under his command, he was under God's command, and from him must receive charge, the highest must know there is a higher than they. This charge must be given him in their sight, that it might be the more affecting to Joshua, and that the people seeing the work and care of their prince, might be the more engaged to assist and encourage him. (4.) He must put some of his honour upon him, *ver. 20.* Joshua at the most had but some of the honour of Moses, and in many instances came short of him; but this seems to be meant of his taking him now, while he lived, into partnership with him in the government, and admitting him to

to act with authority as his assistant. It is an honour to be employed for God and his church; *some of this honour* must be put upon Joshua, that the people being used to obey him while Moses lived, they might the more cheerfully do it afterwards. (5.) He must appoint Eleazar the high-priest, with his breastplate of judgment, to be his privy-council, *ver. 21. He shall stand before Eleazar*, by him to consult the oracle, ready to receive and observe all the instructions that should be given him by it. This was a direction to Joshua, though he was full of the Spirit; and had all this honour put upon him; yet he must do nothing without asking counsel of God, not leaning to his own understanding: It was also a great encouragement to him; to govern Israel, and to conquer Canaan, were two hard tasks, but God assures him that in both he should be under a divine conduct; and in every difficult case God would advise him to that which should be for the best. Moses had recourse to the oracle of God himself, but Joshua and the succeeding judges must use the ministry of the high-priest, and consult the judgment of Urim, which the Jews say, might not be enquired of but by the king, or the head of the Sanhedrin, or by the agent or representative of the people; for them and in their name. Thus the government of Israel was now purely divine, for both the designation and direction of their princes was entirely so. *At the word of the priest*, according to the judgment of Urim, Joshua and all Israel must go out and come in; and no doubt God who thus guided, would preserve both their going out, and their coming in. Those are safe, and may be easy that follow God, and in all their ways acknowledge him. 2. Moses doth according to these directions, *ver. 22, 23.* He cheerfully ordained Joshua. 1. Though it was a present lessening to himself, and amounted almost to a resignation of the government, he is very willing that the people should look off him, and adore the rising sun. 2. Though it was a perpetual slur upon his family. It had not been so much his praise, if he had thus resigned his honour to a son of his own, but with his own hands to ordain Eleazar first high-priest, and now Joshua, one of another tribe chief ruler, while his own children had no preferment at all, but were left in the rank of common Levites, this was such an instance of self-denial, and submission to the will of God, as was more his glory than the highest advancement of his family could have been, for it confirms his character of his being the meekest man upon earth; and faithful to him that appointed him in all his house. This (saith the excellent bishop Patrick) shews him to have had a principle which raised him above all other law-givers, who always took care to establish their families in some share of that greatness, which they themselves possessed; but hereby it appeared Moses acted not from himself, because he acted not for himself.

C H A P. XXVIII.

Now the people were numbred, orders given for the dividing of the land, and a general of the forces nominated and commissioned, one would have expected that the next chapter should have begun the history of the campaign, or at least should have given us an account of the ordinances of war; no, it contains the ordinances of worship, and provides that now they were entering Canaan, they should be sure to take their religion along with them, and not forget that, in the prosecution of their wars, *ver. 1, 2: the laws are here repeated and summed up concerning the sacrifices that were to be offered, 1. Daily. ver. 3—8. 2. Weekly, ver. 9, 10. 3. Monthly, ver. 11—15. 4. Yearly, 1. at the passover, ver. 16—25. 2. At pentecost, ver. 26—31. And the next chapter is concerning the annual solemnities of the seventh month.*

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, My offering and my bread for my sacrifices made by fire for a sweet savour unto me, shall ye observe to me in their due season. 3. And thou shalt say unto them, This is the offering made by fire, which ye shall offer unto the LORD: two lambs of the first year without spot, day by day for a continual burnt-offering. 4. The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer at even. 5. And a tenth part of an ephah of flour for a meat-offering, mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil. 6. It is a continual burnt-offering, which was ordained in mount Sinai, for a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD. 7. And the drink-offering thereof, shall be the fourth part of an hin for the one lamb: in the holy place shalt thou cause the strong wine to be poured unto the LORD, for a drink-offering. 8. And the other lamb shalt thou offer at even: as the meat offering of the morning, and as the drink-offering thereof thou shalt offer it, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

Here is, 1. A general order given concerning the offerings of the Lord which were to be brought in their season, *ver. 2.* These

laws are here given afresh not because the observance of them was wholly disused, during their thirty-eight years wandering in the wilderness, we cannot think they were so long without any public worship, but that at least the daily lamb was offered morning and evening, and doubled on the sabbath-day; so bishop Patrick conjectures; but that many of the sacrifices were then omitted is plainly intimated, *Amos v. 25.* quoted by Stephen, *Act. vii. 42. Did ye offer unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?* It is implied, no you did not. But whether the course of sacrifices had been interrupted or no, God saw fit now to repeat the law of sacrifices; 1. Because this was a new generation of men, that were most of them unborn when the former laws were given; therefore that they might be left without excuse, they have not only these laws written, to be read to them, but again repeated from God himself, and put into a less compass, and a plainer method. 2. Because they were now entering upon war, and might be tempted to think that while they were engaged in that, they should be excused from offering sacrifices; *inter arma silent leges.* No, saith God, *my bread for my sacrifices even now shall ye observe to offer, and that in their due season.* They were then concerned to keep their peace with God when they were at war with their enemies. In the wilderness they were solitary, and quite separate from all other people; and therefore there they needed not so much their distinguishing badges; nor would their omission of sacrifices be so scandalous, as when they came into Canaan, when they were mingled with other people. 3. Because possession was now to be given them of the land of promise, that land flowing with milk and honey; where they would have plenty of all good things; now (saith God) when you are feasting your selves, forget not to offer the bread of your God. Canaan was given them upon this condition that they should observe Gods statutes, *Psal. cv. 44, 45.* 2. The particular law of the daily sacrifice; a lamb in the morning, and a lamb in the evening; which for the constancy of it as duly as the day came, is called a continual burnt-offering, *ver. 3.* Which intimates, that when we are bid to pray always, and to pray without ceasing, it is intended that at least every morning and every evening we offer up our solemn prayers and praises to God. This is said to be ordained in mount Sinai, (*ver. 6.*) when the other laws were given. The institution of it we have, *Exod. xxix. 38.* Nothing is added here in the repetition of the law, but that the wine to be poured out in the drink-offering is ordered to be strong wine, *ver. 7.* The richest and most generous and best-bodied wine they could get. That it was to be poured out upon the altar, and not drunk, they therefore might be ready to think the worst would serve to be so thrown away, yet God requires the strongest, to teach us, to serve God with the best we have. The wine must be strong (saith Ainsworth) because it was a figure of the blood of Christ, the memorial of which is still left to the church, in wine; and of the blood of the martyrs, which was poured out as a drink-offering upon the sacrifice and service of our faith, *Phil. ii. 17.*

9. ¶ And on the sabbath-day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat-offering, mingled with oil, and the drink-offering thereof. 10. This is the burnt-offering of every sabbath; beside the continual burnt-offering, his drink-offering. 11. ¶ And in the beginnings of your months ye shall offer a burnt-offering unto the LORD: two young bullocks, and one ram, seven lambs of the first year without spot, 12. And three tenth deals of flour for a meat-offering, mingled with oil, for one bullock, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat-offering, mingled with oil, for one ram, 13. And a several tenth deal of flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering, unto one lamb, for a burnt-offering of a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD. 14. And their drink-offerings shall be half an hin of wine unto a bullock, and the third part of an hin unto a ram, and a fourth part of an hin unto a lamb: this is the burnt-offering of every month throughout the months of the year. 15. And one kid of the goats for a sin-offering unto the LORD shall be offered, besides the continual burnt-offering and his drink-offering.

The new moons and the sabbaths are often spoken of together, as great solemnities in the Jewish church, very comfortable to the saints then, and typical of gospel grace. Now we have here the sacrifices appointed. 1. For the sabbaths. Every sabbath-day the offering must be doubled, beside the two lambs offered for the daily burnt-offering, there must be two more offered, one (it is probable) added to the morning-sacrifice, and the other to the evening, *ver. 9, 10.* This teacheth us to double our devotions on sabbath-days, for so the duty of the day requires. The sabbath-rest is to be observed, in order to a more close application to the sabbath-work, which ought to fill up sabbath-time. In Ezekiel's temple-service, which points at gospel times, the sabbath-offerings were

were to be six lambs and a ram, with their meat-offerings and drink-offerings, *Ezek. xlvi. 4, 5.* to intimate not only the continuance, but the advancement of sabbath-sanctification in the days of the Messiah. This is the burnt-offering of the sabbath, in his sabbath, so it is in the original, ver. 10. We must do every sabbath-day's work in its day, studying to redeem every minute of sabbath-time, as those that believe it precious; and not thinking to put off one sabbath's work to another, for sufficient to every sabbath is the service thereof. 2. For the new moons. Some suggest, that as the sabbath was kept with an eye to the creation of the world, so the new moons were sanctified with an eye to the Divine providence, which appointeth the moon for seasons, guiding the revolutions of time by its changes and governing sub-lunary bodies (as many think) by its influences: though we observe not any feast of new moons, yet we must not forget to give God the glory of all the precious things put forth by the moon, which he hath established for ever, a faithful witness in heaven, *Psalm lxxxix. 37.* The offerings in the new moons were very considerable, two bullocks, a ram, and seven lambs, with the meat-offerings and drink-offerings that were to attend them, ver. 11, &c. besides a sin-offering, ver. 15. For when we give glory to God, by confessing his mercies, we must give glory to him likewise by confessing our own sins. And when we rejoice in the gifts of common providence, we must make the sacrifice of Christ, that great gift of special grace, the fountain and spring-head of our joy. Some have questioned whether the new moons were to be reckoned among their feasts; but why should they not? when besides the special sacrifices which were then to be offered, they rested from servile works, *Amos viii. 5. blew the trumpets, Num. x. 10.* and went to the prophets to hear the word, *2 Kin. iv. 23.* And the worship performed in the new moons is made typical of gospel solemnities, *Isa. lxvi. 23.*

16. And in the fourteenth day of the first month is the passover of the LORD. 17. And in the fifteenth day of this month is the feast; seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten. 18. In the first day shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do no manner of servile work therein. 19. But ye shall offer a sacrifice made by fire for a burnt-offering unto the LORD, two young bullocks, and one ram, and seven lambs of the first year: they shall be unto you without blemish. 20. And their meat-offering shall be of flour mingled with oil: three tenth deals shall ye offer for a bullock, and two tenth deals for a ram. 21. A several tenth deal shalt thou offer for every lamb throughout the seven lambs. 22. And one goat for a sin-offering, to make an atonement for you. 23. Ye shall offer these beside the burnt-offering in the morning, which is for a continual burnt-offering. 24. After this manner ye shall offer daily throughout the seven days, the meat of the sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD: it shall be offered beside the continual burnt-offering, and his drink-offering. 25. And on the seventh day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work. 26. ¶ Also in the day of the first fruits, when ye bring a new meat-offering unto the LORD, after your weeks be out, ye shall have an holy convocation, ye shall do no servile work. 27. But ye shall offer the burnt-offering for a sweet savour unto the LORD, two young bullocks, one ram, seven lambs of the first year: 28. And their meat-offering of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals unto one bullock, two tenth deals unto one ram. 22. A several tenth deal unto one lamb, throughout the seven lambs. 30. And one kid of the goats to make an atonement for you. 31. Ye shall offer them, beside the continual burnt-offering, and his meat-offering, (they shall be unto you without blemish) and their drink-offerings.

Here is, 1. The appointment of the passover-sacrifices, not that which was the chief, the paschal lamb, sufficient instructions had formerly been given concerning that; but those which were to be offered upon the seven days of unleavened bread which followed it, ver. 17—25. The first and last of those seven days were to be sanctified as sabbaths, by a holy rest, and a holy convocation, and on each of the seven days they were to be very liberal in their sacrifices, in token of their great and constant thankfulness for their deliverance out of Egypt; two bullocks, a ram, and seven lambs. A gospel conversation in gratitude for Christ our passover who was sacrificed, is called the keeping of this feast, *2 Cor. v. 8.* For it is not enough that we purge out the leavened bread of malice and wickedness, but we must offer the bread of our God, even the sacrifice of praise continually, and continue herein unto the end. 2. The sacrifices are likewise appointed which were to be offered at the feast of penta-

cost, here called the day of the first-fruits, ver. 26. In the feast of unleavened bread they offered a sheaf of their first-fruits of barley, (which with them was first ripe) to the priest, *Lev. xxiii. 10.* as an introduction to the harvest; but now about seven weeks after they were to bring a new meat-offering to the Lord, at the end of harvest, in thankfulness to God, who had not only given, but preserved to their use the kindly fruits of the earth, so as that in due time they did enjoy them. It was at this feast, that the Spirit was poured out, *Acts ii. 1.* And thousands were converted by the preaching of the apostles, and were presented to Christ, to be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures. The sacrifice that was to be offered with the loaves of first-fruits is appointed, *Lev. xxiii. 18.* But over and above, besides that, and besides the daily offerings, they were to offer two bullocks, one ram, and seven lambs, with a kid for a sin-offering, ver. 27—30. When God sows plentifully upon us, he expects to reap accordingly from us. Bishop Patrick observes that no peace-offerings are appointed in this chapter, which were chiefly for the benefit of the offerers, and therefore in them they were left more to themselves; but burnt-offerings which were purely for the honour of God, and confessions of his dominion, and which figured evangelical piety and devotion, by which the soul is wholly offered up to God in the flames of holy love: and sin-offerings which were typical of Christ's sacrifice of himself, by which we and our services are perfected and sanctified.

C H A P. XXIX.

This chapter appoints the offerings that were to be made by fire unto the Lord, in the three great solemnities of the seventh month. 1. In the feast of trumpets on the first day of that month, ver. 1—6. 2. In the day of atonement on the tenth day, ver. 7—11. 3. In the feast of tabernacles on the fifteenth day, and the seven days following, ver. 12—38. And then the conclusion of these ordinances, ver. 39, 40.

1. **A**ND in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have an holy convocation, ye shall do no servile work: it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you. 2. And ye shall offer a burnt-offering for a sweet savour unto the LORD, one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year without blemish. 3. And their meat-offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals for a bullock, and two tenth deals for a ram: 4. And one tenth deal for one lamb, throughout the seven lambs. 5. And one kid of the goats for a sin-offering, to make an atonement for you: 6. Beside the burnt-offering of the month, and his meat-offering, and the daily burnt-offering, and his meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, according unto their manner, for a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD. 7. ¶ And ye shall have on the tenth day of this seventh month an holy convocation, and ye shall afflict your souls: ye shall not do any work therein. 8. But ye shall offer a burnt-offering unto the LORD for a sweet savour, one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year: they shall be unto you without blemish. 9. And their meat-offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals to a bullock, and two tenth deals to one ram: 10. A several tenth deal for one lamb throughout the seven lambs: 11. One kid of the goats for a sin-offering, beside the sin-offering of atonement, and the continual burnt-offering, and the meat-offering of it, and their drink-offerings.

There were more sacred solemnities in the seventh month than in any other month of the year: not only because it had been the first month, till the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, which falling into the month Abib, that was thenceforth made the beginning of the months in all ecclesiastical computations; but because still it continued the first month in the civil reckonings of the jubilees, and years of release; and also because it was the time of vacation between harvest and seedness, when they had most leisure to attend the sanctuary: which intimates, that though God will dispense with sacrifices, in consideration of works of necessity and mercy, yet the more leisure we have from the pressing occasions of this life, the more time we should spend in the immediate service of God.

1. We have here the appointment of the sacrifices that were to be offered on the first day of the month, the day of blowing the trumpets; which was as preparative for the two great solemnities of holy mourning on the day of atonement, and holy joy in the feast of tabernacles. The intention of divine institutions is then well answered, when one religious service helps to fit us for another, and all for heaven. The blowing of the trumpets was

was appointed, *Lev. xxix. 1.* Here they are directed what sacrifices to offer on that day, on which there was not then any mention made. Note, Those who would know the mind of God in the scripture, must compare one part of the scripture with another, and put those parts together that have reference to the same thing, for the later discoveries of divine light explain what was dark, and supply what was defective in the former, *that the man of God may be perfect.* The sacrifices then to be offered are particularly ordered here, *ver. 2—6.* And care taken that these should not *superfede the daily oblation*, and that of the new moon. It is hereby intimated, that we must not seek occasions to abate our zeal in God's service, or be glad of an excuse to omit a good duty, but rather rejoice in an opportunity of accumulating, and doing more than ordinary in religion. If we perform family worship, we must not think that that will excuse us from our secret devotions; nor that the days we go to church we need not worship God alone and with our families; but we should *always abound in the work of the Lord.* 2. On the day of atonement. Besides all the services of that day which we had the institution of, *Lev. xvi.* and which one would think required trouble and charge enough; here are *burnt-offerings* ordered to be offered, *ver. 8—10.* For in our faith and repentance those two great gospel graces which were signified by that day's performances, we must have an eye to the glory and honour of God, which was purely intended in the burnt-offerings, there was likewise to be a *kid of the goats for a sin-offering, beside the great sin-offering of atonement*, *ver. 11.* which intimates that there are so many defects and amisses, even in the exercises and expressions of our repentance, that we have need of an interest in a sacrifice to expiate the guilt even of that part of our holy things. Though we must not repent that we have repented, yet we must repent that we have not repented better. It likewise spoke the imperfection of the legal sacrifices, and their insufficiency to take away sin, that on the very day the *sin-offering of atonement* was offered, yet there must be another sin-offering. But *what the law could not do in that it was weak*, that Christ has done.

12. ¶ And on the fifteenth day of the seventh month ye shall have an holy convocation, ye shall do no servile work, and ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days. 13. And ye shall offer a burnt-offering, a sacrifice made by fire of a sweet savour unto the LORD, thirteen young bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year, they shall be without blemish. 14. And their meat-offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals unto every bullock of the thirteen bullocks, two tenth deals to each ram of the two rams: 15. And a several tenth deal to each lamb of the fourteen lambs: 16. And one kid of the goats for a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. 17. ¶ And on the second day ye shall offer twelve young bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without spot. 28. And their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number after the manner: 19. And one kid of the goats for a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, and the meat-offering thereof, and their drink-offerings. 20. ¶ And on the third day, eleven bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish. 21. And their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number after the manner: 22. And one goat for a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering and his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. 23. ¶ And on the fourth day ten bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish. 24. Their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number after the manner: 25. And one kid of the goats for a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. 26. ¶ And on the fifth day nine bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without spot: 27. And their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner: 28. And one goat for a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, and his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. 29. ¶ And on the sixth day eight bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish: 30. And their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the

lambs, shall be according to their number after the manner: 31. And one goat for a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. 32. ¶ And on the seventh day seven bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish: 33. And their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number after the manner: 34. And one goat for a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. 35. ¶ On the eighth day ye shall have a solemn assembly: ye shall do no servile work therein. 36. But ye shall offer a burnt-offering, a sacrifice made by fire of a sweet savour unto the LORD, one bullock, one ram, seven lambs of the first year without blemish: 37. Their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullock, for the ram, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number after the manner: 38. And one goat for a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, and his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. 39. These things ye shall do unto the LORD, in your set feasts, besides your vows, and your free-will-offerings, for your burnt-offerings, and for your meat-offerings, and for your drink-offerings, and for your peace-offerings. 40. And Moses told the children of Israel, according to all that the LORD commanded Moses.

Presently after the day of atonement, that day for men to afflict their souls, followed the feast of tabernacles, in which they were to rejoice before the Lord, for they that *sow in tears* shall soon *reap in joy*. To the former laws about this feast which we had, *Lev. xxiii. 34, &c.* here is added directions about the offerings made by fire, which they were to offer unto the Lord during the seven days of that feast, *Lev. xxiii. 36.* Observe here, 1. Their days of rejoicing were to be days of sacrifices. A disposition to be cheerful then doth us no harm, nor is any bad symptom, when it is so far from disfitting us for, that it encourageth and enlargeth our hearts in the duties of God's immediate service. 2. All the days of their dwelling in booths they must offer sacrifices; while we are here in a tabernacle state, it is our interest as well as duty constantly to keep our communion with God: nor will the unsettledness of our outward condition excuse us in our neglect of the duties of God's worship. 3. The sacrifices for each of the seven days, though differing in nothing but the number of the bullocks are severally and particularly appointed, which yet is no vain repetition; for God would thus teach them to be very exact in those observances, and to keep an eye of faith fixed upon the institution in every day's work. It likewise intimates that the repetition of the same services if performed with an upright heart, and with a continued fire of pious and devout affection is no weariness to God, and therefore we ought not to snuff at it, or to say, *Behold, what a weariness is it to us!* 4. The number of the bullocks (which were the most costly part of the sacrifice) decreased every day. On the first day of the feast they were to offer thirteen, on the second day but twelve, on the third day eleven, &c. So that on the seventh day they offered seven. And the last day, though it was the great day of the feast, and celebrated with a holy convocation, yet they were to offer but one bullock; and whereas on all the other days, they offered two rams, and fourteen lambs, on this but one ram and seven lambs. Such was the will of the law-maker, and that is reason enough for the law. Some suggest, that God herein considered the infirmity of the flesh, which is apt to grudge at the charge and expence of religion; it is therefore ordered to grow less and less, that they might not complain as if God had made them to serve with an offering, *Isa. xliii. 23.* Or, it is hereby intimated to them, that the legal dispensation should wax old, and vanish away at last; and the multitude of their sacrifices should end in one great sacrifice, infinitely more worthy than them all. It was on the last day of this feast, after all these sacrifices had been offered that our Lord Jesus stood and cried to those who still thirsted after righteousness, (being sensible of the insufficiency of these sacrifices to justify them) *to come unto him and drink*, *John vii. 37.* 5. The meat-offerings and drink-offerings attended all the sacrifices, according to their number, after the manner. Be there never so much flesh, it is no feast without bread and drink, therefore these must never be omitted at God's altar, which was his table. We must not think that doing much in religion will be accepted, if we do not do it well, and after the manner that God hath appointed. 6. Every day there must be a sin-offering offered, as we observed in the other feasts. Our burnt-offerings of praise cannot be accepted of God, unless we have an interest in the great sacrifice of propitiation, which Christ offered, when for us he made himself a sin-offering. 7. Even when all these sacrifices were offered, yet the continual burnt-offering must not be omitted, either morning or evening, but each day that must be offered, first in the morning,

ing, and last in the evening. No extraordinary services should jumble out our stated devotions.

Lastly, Though all these sacrifices were required to be by the body of the congregation, at the common charge, yet, besides these, particular persons were to glorify God with their vows and their free-will offerings, *ver.* 34. When God commanded that this they must do, he left room for the generosity of their devotion, a great deal more they might do; not inventing other worships, but abounding in these, as *2 Chron.* xxx. 23, 24. Large directions had been given in Leviticus, concerning the offerings of all sorts that should be brought by particular persons; according to the providences of God concerning them, and the graces of God in them. Though every Israelite had an interest in these common sacrifices, yet he must not think that these will serve, instead of his vows and his free-will offerings. Thus our ministers praying with us and for us, will not excuse us from praying for ourselves.

C H A P. XXX.

In this chapter we have a law concerning vows, which had been mentioned in the close of the foregoing chapter. 1. Here is a general rule laid down, that all vows must be carefully performed, ver. 1, 2. 2. Some particular exceptions to this rule. 1. That the vows of daughters should not be binding, unless allowed by the father, ver. 3—5. Nor 2. The vows of wives, unless allowed by the husband, ver. 6—16.

1. **A**ND Moses spake unto the heads of the tribes, concerning the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded.
2. If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond, he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.

This law was delivered to the heads of the tribes, that they might instruct those who were under their charge, explain the law to them, give them necessary cautions upon it, and call them to account, if there were occasion for the breach of their vows. Perhaps, the heads of the tribes had upon some emergency of this kind consulted Moses, and desired by him to know the mind of God, and here they are told it. *This is the thing which the Lord has commanded* concerning vows, and it is a command still in force.

1. The case supposed is, that a person vows a vow unto the Lord, making God a party to the promise, and designing his honour and glory in it. The matter of the vow is supposed to be something lawful: no man can be by his own promise bound to that, which he is already by the Divine precept bound from. Yet it is supposed to be something, which in such and such measures and degrees was not necessary duty antecedent to the vow. A person might vow to bring such and such sacrifices at certain times; to give such a sum, or such a proportion, in alms; to forbear such meats and drinks, which the law allowed; to fast and afflict the soul (which is instanced in *ver.* 13.) at other times besides the day of atonement. And many the like such vows might be made either in an extraordinary heat of holy zeal, or in humiliation for some sin committed, or, for the prevention of sin, in pursuit of some mercy desired, or in gratitude for some mercy received. It is of great use to make such vows as these, provided they be made in sincerity, and with due caution. Vows (say the Jewish doctors) are *the hedge of separation, i. e.* a fence to religion. He that vows, is here said to *bind his soul with a bond*. It is a vow to God, who is a Spirit, and to him the soul with all its powers must be obliged. A promise to man is a bond upon the estate, but a promise to God is a bond upon the soul. Our sacramental vows by which we are bound to no more than what was before our duty, and which neither father nor husband can disannul are bonds upon the soul, and by them we must feel ourselves bound out from all sin, and bound up to the whole will of God. Our occasional vows concerning that which before was in our own power, *Acts v.* 4. when they are made, are bonds upon the soul likewise.

2. The command given is, that these vows be conscientiously performed. *He shall not break his word*, though afterwards he may change his mind, but he shall do according to what he has said. *Marg.* *He shall not prophane his word*. Vowing is an ordinance of God, if we vow in hypocrisy we prophane that ordinance; it is plainly determined, *Better not vow, than vow and not pay*, *Eccl.* v. 6. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked*. His promises to us are *yea and Amen*, let not ours to him be *yea and nay*.

3. If a woman also vow a vow unto the LORD, and bind *her self* by a bond, *being* in her fathers house, in her youth: 4. And her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her: then all her vows

shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand. 5. But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds, wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand: and the LORD shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her. 6. And if she had at all an husband when she vowed, or uttered ought out of her lips, wherewith she bound her soul; 7. And her husband heard *it*, and held his peace at her in the day that he heard *it*: then her vows shall stand, and her bonds wherewith she bound her soul, shall stand. 8. But if her husband disallow her on the day that he heard *it*, then he shall make her vow which she vowed, and that which she uttered with her lips, wherewith she bound her soul, of none effect, and the LORD shall forgive her. 9. But every vow of a widow, and of her that is divorced, wherewith they have bound their souls, shall stand against her. 10. And if she vowed in her husbands house, or bound her soul by a bond with an oath; 11. And her husband heard *it*, and held his peace at her, and disallowed her not: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she bound her soul, shall stand. 12. But if her husband hath utterly made them void on the day he heard *them*; then whatsoever proceeded out of her lips concerning her vows, or concerning the bond of her soul, shall not stand: her husband hath made them void, and the LORD shall forgive her. 13. Every vow, and every binding oath to afflict the soul, her husband may establish it, or her husband may make it void. 14. But if her husband altogether hold his peace at her, from day to day, then he establisheth all her vows, or all her bonds which *are* upon her: he confirmeth them, because he held his peace at her, in the day that he heard *them*. 15. But if he shall any ways make them void, after that he had heard *them*, then he shall bear her iniquity. 16. These *are* the statutes which the LORD commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, between the father and his daughter, *being yet* in her youth in her fathers house.

It is here taken for granted that all such persons as are at their own dispose (*sui juris* as we say) and are likewise of sound understanding and memory whatever they vow that is lawful, and possible, they are bound to perform it; but if the person vowing be under the dominion and at the dispose of another, the case is different.

Two cases much alike are here put, and determined. 1. The case of a daughter in her father's house; and some think, probably enough, that it extends to a son likewise while he is at home with his father, and under tutors and governors. Whether the exception may thus be stretched I cannot say: *Non est distinguendum, ubi lex non distinguit*. The rule is general, If a man vow, he must pay. But for a daughter it is express, her vow is ambulatory, and in suspense till her father knows it, and (it is supposed) knows it from her; for when it comes to his knowledge, it is in his power either to ratify or nullify it. But in favour of the vow, 1. Even his silence shall suffice to ratify it, *ver.* 4. If he *hold his peace her vows shall stand*. Silence gives consent. *Qui tacet, consentire videtur*. Hereby he allows his daughter the liberty she has assumed, and as long as he saith nothing against her vows she shall be bound by it. But, 2. His protestation against it shall perfectly disannul it. Because it is possible such vows may be prejudicial to the affairs of the family, break the father's measures, perplex the provision made for his table (if the vow related to meats) or lessen the provision made for his children, if the vow would be more expensive than his estate would bear; however it was certain, it was an infringement of his authority over his child, and therefore if he disallow it, she is discharged, and *the Lord shall forgive her*, i. e. she shall not be charged with the guilt of violating her vow; she shewed her good will in making the vow, and if her intentions therein were sincere she shall be accepted; and to obey her father shall be accounted better than sacrifice. This shews what a mighty deference children owe to their parents, and how much they ought to honour them, and be obedient to them. It is for the interest of the publick that the paternal authority be supported, for when children are countenanced in their disobedience to their parents, (as they were by the tradition of the elders, *Matth.* xv. 5, 6.) they soon become in other things *children of Belial*. If this law be not to be extended to childrens marrying without their parents consent, so far as to put it in parents power to null the marriage and dissolve the obligation (as some have thought it doth;) yet certainly it proves the sinfulness of it, and obligeth the children, that have thus done foolishly, to repent and humble themselves before God and their parents.

was appointed, *Lev. xxix. 1.* Here they are directed what sacrifices to offer on that day, on which there was not then any mention made. Note, Those who would know the mind of God in the scripture, must compare one part of the scripture with another, and put those parts together that have reference to the same thing, for the later discoveries of divine light explain what was dark, and supply what was defective in the former, *that the man of God may be perfect.* The sacrifices then to be offered are particularly ordered here, *ver. 2—6.* And care taken that these should not *superfede the daily oblation*, and that of the new moon. It is hereby intimated, that we must not seek occasions to abate our zeal in God's service, or be glad of an excuse to omit a good duty, but rather rejoice in an opportunity of accumulating, and doing more than ordinary in religion. If we perform family worship, we must not think that that will excuse us from our secret devotions; nor that the days we go to church we need not worship God alone and with our families; but we should *always abound in the work of the Lord.* 2. On the day of atonement. Besides all the services of that day which we had the institution of, *Lev. xvi.* and which one would think required trouble and charge enough; here are *burnt-offerings* ordered to be offered, *ver. 8—10.* For in our faith and repentance those two great gospel graces which were signified by that day's performances, we must have an eye to the glory and honour of God, which was purely intended in the burnt-offerings, there was likewise to be a *kid of the goats for a sin-offering, beside the great sin-offering of atonement*, *ver. 11.* which intimates that there are so many defects and amisses, even in the exercises and expressions of our repentance, that we have need of an interest in a sacrifice to expiate the guilt even of that part of our holy things. Though we must not repent that we have repented, yet we must repent that we have not repented better. It likewise spoke the imperfection of the legal sacrifices, and their insufficiency to take away sin, that on the very day the *sin-offering of atonement* was offered, yet there must be another sin-offering. But *what the law could not do in that it was weak*, that Christ has done.

12. ¶ And on the fifteenth day of the seventh month ye shall have an holy convocation, ye shall do no servile work, and ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days. 13. And ye shall offer a burnt-offering, a sacrifice made by fire of a sweet savour unto the LORD, thirteen young bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year, they shall be without blemish. 14. And their meat-offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals unto every bullock of the thirteen bullocks, two tenth deals to each ram of the two rams: 15. And a several tenth deal to each lamb of the fourteen lambs: 16. And one kid of the goats for a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. 17. ¶ And on the second day ye shall offer twelve young bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without spot. 18. And their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number after the manner: 19. And one kid of the goats for a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, and the meat-offering thereof, and their drink-offerings. 20. ¶ And on the third day, eleven bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish. 21. And their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number after the manner: 22. And one goat for a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering and his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. 23. ¶ And on the fourth day ten bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish. 24. Their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number after the manner: 25. And one kid of the goats for a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. 26. ¶ And on the fifth day nine bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without spot: 27. And their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner: 28. And one goat for a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, and his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. 29. ¶ And on the sixth day eight bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish: 30. And their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the

lambs, shall be according to their number after the manner: 31. And one goat for a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. 32. ¶ And on the seventh day seven bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish: 33. And their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number after the manner: 34. And one goat for a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. 35. ¶ On the eighth day ye shall have a solemn assembly: ye shall do no servile work therein. 36. But ye shall offer a burnt-offering, a sacrifice made by fire of a sweet savour unto the LORD, one bullock, one ram, seven lambs of the first year without blemish: 37. Their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullock, for the ram, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number after the manner: 38. And one goat for a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, and his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. 39. These things ye shall do unto the LORD, in your set feasts, besides your vows, and your free-will-offerings, for your burnt-offerings, and for your meat-offerings, and for your drink-offerings, and for your peace-offerings. 40. And Moses told the children of Israel, according to all that the LORD commanded Moses.

Presently after the day of atonement, that day for men to afflict their souls, followed the feast of tabernacles, in which they were to rejoice before the Lord, for they that *sow in tears* shall soon *reap in joy.* To the former laws about this feast which we had, *Lev. xxiii. 34, &c.* here is added directions about the offerings made by fire, which they were to offer unto the Lord during the seven days of that feast, *Lev. xxiii. 36.* Observe here, 1. Their days of rejoicing were to be days of sacrifices. A disposition to be cheerful then doth us no harm, nor is any bad symptom, when it is so far from disfitting us for, that it encourageth and enlargeth our hearts in the duties of God's immediate service. 2. All the days of their dwelling in booths they must offer sacrifices; while we are here in a tabernacle state, it is our interest as well as duty constantly to keep our communion with God: nor will the unsettledness of our outward condition excuse us in our neglect of the duties of God's worship. 3. The sacrifices for each of the seven days, though differing in nothing but the number of the bullocks are severally and particularly appointed, which yet is no vain repetition; for God would thus teach them to be very exact in those observances, and to keep an eye of faith fixed upon the institution in every day's work. It likewise intimates that the repetition of the same services if performed with an upright heart, and with a continued fire of pious and devout affection is no weariness to God, and therefore we ought not to snuff at it, or to say, *Behold, what a weariness is it to us!* 4. The number of the bullocks (which were the most costly part of the sacrifice) decreased every day. On the first day of the feast they were to offer thirteen, on the second day but twelve, on the third day eleven, &c. So that on the seventh day they offered seven. And the last day, though it was the great day of the feast, and celebrated with a holy convocation, yet they were to offer but one bullock; and whereas on all the other days, they offered two rams, and fourteen lambs, on this but one ram and seven lambs. Such was the will of the law-maker, and that is reason enough for the law. Some suggest, that God herein considered the infirmity of the flesh, which is apt to grudge at the charge and expence of religion; it is therefore ordered to grow less and less, that they might not complain as if God had made them to serve with an offering, *Isa. xliii. 23.* Or, it is hereby intimated to them, that the legal dispensation should wax old, and vanish away at last; and the multitude of their sacrifices should end in one great sacrifice, infinitely more worthy than them all. It was on the last day of this feast, after all these sacrifices had been offered that our Lord Jesus stood and cried to those who still *thirsted after righteousness*, (being sensible of the insufficiency of these sacrifices to justify them) *to come unto him and drink*, *John vii. 37.* 5. The meat-offerings and drink-offerings attended all the sacrifices, according to their number, after the manner. Be there never so much flesh, it is no feast without bread and drink, therefore these must never be omitted at God's altar, which was his table. We must not think that doing much in religion will be accepted, if we do not do it well, and after the manner that God hath appointed. 6. Every day there must be a sin-offering offered, as we observed in the other feasts. Our burnt-offerings of praise cannot be accepted of God, unless we have an interest in the great sacrifice of propitiation, which Christ offered, when for us he made himself a sin-offering. 7. Even when all these sacrifices were offered, yet the continual burnt-offering must not be omitted, either morning or evening, but each day that must be offered, first in the morning,

ing, and last in the evening. No extraordinary services should jumble out our stated devotions.

Lastly, Though all these sacrifices were required to be by the body of the congregation, at the common charge, yet, besides these, particular persons were to glorify God with their vows and their free-will offerings, *ver.* 34. When God commanded that this they must do, he left room for the generosity of their devotion, a great deal more they might do; not inventing other worships, but abounding in these, as *2 Chron.* xxx. 23, 24. Large directions had been given in Leviticus, concerning the offerings of all sorts that should be brought by particular persons; according to the providences of God concerning them, and the graces of God in them. Though every Israelite had an interest in these common sacrifices, yet he must not think that these will serve, instead of his vows and his free-will offerings. Thus our ministers praying with us and for us, will not excuse us from praying for ourselves.

C H A P. XXX.

In this chapter we have a law concerning vows, which had been mentioned in the close of the foregoing chapter. 1. Here is a general rule laid down, that all vows must be carefully performed, ver. 1, 2. 2. Some particular exceptions to this rule. 1. That the vows of daughters should not be binding, unless allowed by the father, ver. 3—5. Nor 2. The vows of wives, unless allowed by the husband, ver. 6—16.

1. **A**ND Moses spake unto the heads of the tribes, concerning the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded. 2. If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond, he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.

This law was delivered to the heads of the tribes, that they might instruct those who were under their charge, explain the law to them, give them necessary cautions upon it, and call them to account, if there were occasion for the breach of their vows. Perhaps, the heads of the tribes had upon some emergency of this kind consulted Moses, and desired by him to know the mind of God, and here they are told it. *This is the thing which the Lord has commanded concerning vows, and it is a command still in force.*

1. The case supposed is, that a person vows a vow unto the Lord, making God a party to the promise, and designing his honour and glory in it. The matter of the vow is supposed to be something lawful: no man can be by his own promise bound to that, which he is already by the Divine precept bound from. Yet it is supposed to be something, which in such and such measures and degrees was not necessary duty antecedent to the vow. A person might vow to bring such and such sacrifices at certain times; to give such a sum, or such a proportion, in alms; to forbear such meats and drinks, which the law allowed; to fast and afflict the soul (which is instanced in *ver.* 13.) at other times besides the day of atonement. And many the like such vows might be made either in an extraordinary heat of holy zeal, or in humiliation for some sin committed, or, for the prevention of sin, in pursuit of some mercy desired, or in gratitude for some mercy received. It is of great use to make such vows as these, provided they be made in sincerity, and with due caution. Vows (say the Jewish doctors) are *the hedge of separation, i. e.* a fence to religion. He that vows, is here said to *bind his soul with a bond*. It is a vow to God, who is a Spirit, and to him the soul with all its powers must be obliged. A promise to man is a bond upon the estate, but a promise to God is a bond upon the soul. Our sacramental vows by which we are bound to no more than what was before our duty, and which neither father nor husband can disannul are bonds upon the soul, and by them we must feel ourselves bound out from all sin, and bound up to the whole will of God. Our occasional vows concerning that which before was in our own power, *Acts* v. 4. when they are made, are bonds upon the soul likewise.

2. The command given is, that these vows be conscientiously performed. *He shall not break his word*, though afterwards he may change his mind, but he shall do according to what he has said. *Marg.* *He shall not prophane his word*. Vowing is an ordinance of God, if we vow in hypocrisy we prophane that ordinance; it is plainly determined, *Better not vow, than vow and not pay*, *Eccl.* v. 6. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked*. His promises to us are *yea and Amen*, let not ours to him be *yea and nay*.

3. If a woman also vow a vow unto the LORD, and bind her self by a bond, being in her fathers house, in her youth: 4. And her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her: then all her vows

shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand. 5. But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds, wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand: and the LORD shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her. 6. And if she had at all an husband when she vowed, or uttered ought out of her lips, wherewith she bound her soul; 7. And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her in the day that he heard it: then her vows shall stand, and her bonds wherewith she bound her soul, shall stand. 8. But if her husband disallow her on the day that he heard it, then he shall make her vow which she vowed, and that which she uttered with her lips, wherewith she bound her soul, of none effect, and the LORD shall forgive her. 9. But every vow of a widow, and of her that is divorced, wherewith they have bound their souls, shall stand against her. 10. And if she vowed in her husbands house, or bound her soul by a bond with an oath; 11. And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her, and disallowed her not: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she bound her soul, shall stand. 12. But if her husband hath utterly made them void on the day he heard them; then whatsoever proceeded out of her lips concerning her vows, or concerning the bond of her soul, shall not stand: her husband hath made them void, and the LORD shall forgive her. 13. Every vow, and every binding oath to afflict the soul, her husband may establish it, or her husband may make it void. 14. But if her husband altogether hold his peace at her, from day to day, then he shall hold his peace at her, from day to day, then he shall hold his peace at her, in the day that he heard them. 15. But if he shall any ways make them void, after that he had heard them, then he shall bear her iniquity. 16. These are the statutes which the LORD commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, between the father and his daughter, being yet in her youth in her fathers house.

It is here taken for granted that all such persons as are at their own dispose (*sui juris* as we say) and are likewise of sound understanding and memory whatever they vow that is lawful, and possible, they are bound to perform it; but if the person vowing be under the dominion and at the dispose of another, the case is different.

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2. The case of a wife is much the same. As for a woman that is a widow, or divorced, she has neither father nor husband to control her, so that whatever vows she binds her soul with, they shall *stand against her*, ver. 9. it is at her peril if she run back; but a wife who has nothing that she can strictly call her own, but with her husband's allowance, without that, cannot make any such vow.

1. The law is plain in case of a wife that continues so long after the vow. If her husband allow her vow, though only by silence, it stands, ver. 6, 7. If he disallow it, since her obligation to that which she had vowed arose purely from her own act, and not from any prior command of God, her obligation to her husband shall take place of it, for to him she ought to be in subjection, *as unto the Lord*; and now it is so far from being her duty to fulfil her vow that it would be her sin to disobey her husband, whose consent perhaps she ought to have asked before she made the vow; therefore she needs *forgiveness*, ver. 8.

2. The law is the same in case of a wife that soon after becomes a widow, or is put away. Though if she return to her father's house, she doth not therefore so come again under his authority, as that he has power to disannul her vows, ver. 9. yet if the vow were made while she was in the house of her husband, and her husband disallowed it, it was made void and of none effect for ever, and she doth not return under the law of her vow, when she is loosed from the law of her husband. This seems to be the distinct meaning of, ver. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. Which otherwise would be but a repetition of, ver. 6, 7, 8. But it is added, ver. 15. That if the husband make void the vows of his wife, he shall *bear her iniquity*, i. e. if the thing she had vowed were really good, for the honour of God and the prosperity of her own soul, and the husband disallow it out of covetousness, or for a humour, or to shew his authority, though she be discharged from the obligation of her vow, yet he will have a great deal to answer for.

Now, here it is very observable how carefully the divine law consults the good order of families, and preserves the power of superior relations, and the duty and reverence of inferiors. It is fit every man should *bear rule in his own house*, and have his wife and children in subjection *with all gravity*; and rather than this great rule should be broken, or any encouragement given to inferior relations to break those bonds asunder, God himself would quit his right, and release the obligation even of a solemn vow; so much doth religion strengthen the ties of all relations, and secure the welfare of all societies, and in it the *families of the earth are blessed*.

C H A P. XXXI.

This chapter belongs to the book of the wars of the Lord, into which it is probable it was inserted. It is the history of a Holy War, a war with Midian. Here is (1.) A divine command for the war, ver. 1, 2. (2.) The undertaking of the war, ver. 3—6. (3.) The glorious success of it, ver. 7—12. (4.) Their triumphant return from the war. 1. The respect Moses paid the soldiers, ver. 13. 2. The rebuke he gave them for sparing the women, ver. 14—18. 3. The directions he gave them for the purifying of themselves, and their effects, ver. 19—24. 4. The distribution of the spoil they had taken; one half to the soldiers, the other to the congregation, and a tribute to the Lord out of each, ver. 25—47. 5. The free-will-offering of the officers, ver. 48—54.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites: afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people. 3. And Moses spake unto the people, saying, Arm some of your selves unto the war, and let them go against the Midianites, and avenge the LORD of Midian. 4. Of every tribe a thousand throughout all the tribes of Israel, shall ye send to the war. 5. So there were delivered out of the thousands of Israel, a thousand of every tribe twelve thousand armed for war. 6. And Moses sent them to the war, a thousand of every tribe, them and Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest, to the war with the holy instruments, and the trumpets to blow in his hand.

Here, 1. The Lord of hosts gives orders to Moses to make war upon the Midianites, and his commission, no doubt, justified this war, though it will not serve to justify the like without such commission. The Midianites were the posterity of Abraham by Keturah, Gen. xxv. 2. Some of them settled south of Canaan, among whom Jethro lived, and they retained the worship of the true God; but these were settled east of Canaan, and were fallen into idolatry, neighbours to, and in confederacy with, the Moabites. Their land was not designed to be given to Israel, nor had Israel meddled with them, if they had not made themselves obnoxious to their resentments, by sending their ill women

among them to draw them to whoredom and idolatry. This was the provocation, this was the quarrel: For this (saith God) *avenge Israel of the Midianites*, ver. 2. (1.) God would have the Midianites chastised, an inroad made upon that part of their country which lay next to the camp of Israel, and which was concerned in that mischief, probably more than the Moabites, who therefore were let alone. God will have us to reckon those our worst enemies that draw us to sin, and to avoid them; and since *every man is tempted when he is drawn aside of his own lusts*, and those are the Midianites which ensnare us with their wives, on them we should avenge ourselves; not only make no league with them, but make war upon them, by living a life of mortification. God had taken vengeance on his own people for yielding to the Midianites temptations, now the Midianites must be reckoned with, that gave the temptation, for *the deceived and the deceiver are his*, (Job xii. 16.) both accountable to his tribunal; and though *judgment begin at the house of God*, it shall not end there, 1 Pet. iv. 17. There is a day coming, when vengeance will be taken on those that have introduced errors and corruptions into the church, and the devil that deceived men will be *cast into the lake of fire*. Israel's quarrel with Amalek that fought against them was not avenged till long after, but their quarrel with Midian that debauched them was speedily avenged, for they were looked upon, as much the more dangerous and malicious enemies. (2.) God would have it done by Moses, in his life-time; that he who had so deeply resented that injury, might have the satisfaction of seeing it avenged. See this execution done upon the enemies of God and Israel, and *afterwards thou shalt be gathered to thy people*. This was the only piece of service of this kind that Moses must farther do, and then he has accomplished as a hireling his day, and shall have his *Quietus*: hitherto his usefulness must come and no further; the wars of Canaan must be carried on by another hand. Note, God sometimes removes useful men, when we think they could ill be spared; but this ought to satisfy us, that they are never removed, till they have done the work which was appointed them.

2. Moses gives orders to the people to prepare for this expedition, ver. 3. He would not have the whole body of the camp to stir, but they must *arm some of themselves to the war*, such as were either most fit, or most forward, and *avenge the Lord of Midian*. God said, *avenge Israel*, Moses saith, *avenge the Lord*, for the interests of God and Israel are united, and the cause of both is one and the same. And if God in what he doth, shews himself jealous for the honour of Israel, sure Israel, in what they do, ought to shew themselves jealous for the glory of God. Then only we can justify the avenging of ourselves, when it is the *vengeance of the Lord* that we engage in: Nay for this reason we are forbidden to avenge ourselves, because God has said, *Vengeance is mine, I will repay*.

3. A detachment is drawn out accordingly, for this service, a thousand out of every tribe, twelve thousand in all; a small number in comparison with what they could have sent, and it is likely small in comparison with the number of the enemies they were sent against. But God would teach them, that *it is all one to him to save by many, or by few*, 1 Sam. xiv. 6.

4. Phinehas the son of Eleazar is sent along with them. It is strange, that no mention is made of Joshua in this great action. If he was general of these forces, why do we not find him leading them out? If he tarried at home, why do we not find him meeting them with Moses at their return? It is probable, each tribe having a captain of its own thousand, there was no general, but they proceeded in the order of their march through the wilderness, Judah first, and the rest in their posts, under the command of their respective captains, spoken of ver. 48. But the war being a holy war, Phinehas was their common head, not to supply the place of a general, but, by the oracle of God, to determine the resolves of their councils of war, in which the captains of thousands would all acquiesce, and according to which they would act in conjunction. He therefore took with him the holy instruments or vessels, probably the breast-plate of judgment, by which God might be consulted in any emergency. Though he was not yet the high-priest, yet he might be delegated *pro hac vice* to bear the Urim and Thummim, as 1 Sam. xxiii. 6. And there was a particular reason for sending Phinehas to preside in this expedition; he had already signalized himself for his zeal against the Midianites, and their cursed arts to ensnare Israel, when he slew Cozbi a daughter of a chief house in Midian, for her impudence in the matter of Peor, chap. xxv. 15. He that had so well used the sword of justice against a particular criminal, was best qualified to guide the sword of war against the whole nation. *Thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things*.

7. And they warred against the Midianites, as the LORD commanded Moses, and they slew all the males. 8. And they slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain, namely, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian: Balaam also the son of Beor, they slew with the sword. 9. And the children of Israel took all the women

women of Midian captives, and their little ones, and took the spoil of all their cattle, and all their flocks, and all their goods. 10. And they burnt all their cities wherein they dwelt, and all their goodly castles with fire. 11. And they took all the spoil, and all the prey, *both* of men and of beasts. 12. And they brought the captives, and the prey, and the spoil unto Moses and Eleazar the priest, and unto the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the camp, at the plains of Moab, which are by Jordan near Jericho.

Here is, 1. The descent which this little army of Israelites made, under the Divine commission, conduct, and command, upon the country of Midian. They *warred against the Midianites*. It is very probable, they first published their manifesto, shewing the reasons of the war, and requiring them to give up the ring-leaders of the mischief to justice; for such afterwards was the law, *Deut. xx. 10.* and such the practice, *Judg. xx. 13.* But the Midianites justifying what they had done, and standing by those that had done it, the Israelites attacked them with fire and sword, and all the pious fury which their zeal for God and their people inspired them with.

2. The execution (the military execution) they did in this descent. (1.) They *slew all the males*, ver. 7. *i. e.* all they met with as far as they went; they put them all to the sword, and gave no quarter. But that they did not slay *all the males* of the nation is certain, for we find the Midianites a powerful and formidable enemy to Israel in the days of Gideon; and that they were the Midianites of this country, for they are reckoned with the children of the east, *Judg. vi. 3.* (2.) They *slew the kings of Midian*, the same that are called *elders of Midian*, chap. xxii. 4. and *dukes of Sihon*, *Josh. xiii. 21.* Five of these princes are here named, one of which is Zur, probably the same Zur whose daughter Cozbi was, chap. xxv. 15. (3.) They slew Balaam. Many conjectures there are, what brought Balaam among the Midianites at this time; it is probable, the Midianites having intelligence of the march of this army of Israelites against them, hired Balaam to come and assist them with his enchantments; that if he could not prevail to act offensively in their favours, by cursing the armies of Israel, yet he might act defensively, by blessing the country of Midian. Whatever was the occasion of his being there, God's overruling providence brought him thither, and there his just vengeance found him. Had he himself believed what he said of the happy state of Israel, he would not have herded himself thus with the enemies of Israel, but justly doth he *die the death of the wicked*, though he pretended to desire that of the righteous, and go *down slain to the pit with the uncircumcised*, who rebelled thus against the convictions of his own conscience. The Midianites wives were Balaam's projects, it was therefore just he should perish with them, *Hos. iv. 5.* New was his folly made manifest to all men, who foretold the fate of others, but foresaw not his own. (4.) They took all the *women and children captives*, ver. 9. (5.) They *burnt their cities and goodly castles*, ver. 10. not designing to inhabit them themselves, (that country was out of their line) they thus prevented those who had made their escape, from sheltering themselves in their own country, and settling there again. Some understand it of their idol-temples; it was fit they should share in this vengeance. (6.) They plundered the country, and carried off all the cattle, and valuable goods, and so returned to the camp of Israel laden with a very rich booty, ver. 9, 11, 12. Thus (as when they came out of Egypt) they were enriched with the spoils of their enemies, and furnished with stocks for the good land into which God was bringing them.

13. ¶ And Moses and Eleazar the priest, and all the princes of the congregation, went forth to meet them without the camp. 14. And Moses was wroth with the officers of the host, *with* the captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, which came from the battle. 15. And Moses said unto them, Have ye saved all the women alive? 16. Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD. 17. Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man, by lying with him. 18. But all the women children that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for your selves. 19. And do ye abide without the camp seven days: whosoever hath killed any person, and whosoever hath touched any slain, purifie *both* yourselves and your captives on the third day, and on the seventh day. 20. And purifie all *your* raiment, and all that is made of skins, and all work of goats' hair, and all things made of wood. 21. ¶ And Eleazar the priest said unto the men of war which went to the battle, This is the ordinance of the law which the LORD commanded Moses; No. xii.

22. Only the gold, and the silver, the brass, the iron, the tin, and the lead. 23. Every thing that may abide the fire, ye shall make *it* go through the fire, and it shall be clean; nevertheless it shall be purified with the water of separation: and all that abideth not the fire, ye shall make go through the water. 24. And ye shall wash your clothes on the seventh day, and ye shall be clean, and afterward ye shall come into the camp.

We have here the triumphant return of the army of Israel from the war with Midian. And here,

1. They were met with great respect, ver. 13. Moses himself, notwithstanding his age and gravity, walked out of the camp to congratulate their victory, and to grace the solemnity of their triumphs. Publick successes should be publicly acknowledged, to the glory of God, and the encouragement of those that have jeopardied their lives in their country's cause.

2. They were severely reprov'd for saving the women alive. It is very likely Moses had commanded them to kill the women, at least that was implied in the general order, to avenge Israel of the Midianites; the execution having reference to that crime, their drawing them in to the worship of Peor, it was easy to conclude that the women who were the principal criminals must not be spared. What (saith Moses) *have ye saved the women alive?* ver. 15. He was moved with a holy indignation at the sight of them. *These were they that caused the children of Israel to commit the trespass;* and therefore, (1.) *It is just they should die.* The law in case of whoredom was, *The adulterer and adulteress shall surely be put to death.* God had put to death the adulterers of Israel by the plague, and now it was fit the adulteresses of Midian, especially since they had been the tempters, should be put to death by the sword. (2.) *It is dangerous to let them live;* they will be still tempting the Israelites to uncleanness, and so your captives will be your conquerors, and a second time your destroyers. Severe orders are therefore given that all the grown women should be slain in cold blood, and only the female children spared.

3. They were obliged to purify themselves, according to the ceremony of the law, and to abide without the camp seven days, till their purification was accomplished. For, (1.) They had had their hands in blood, by which, though they had not contracted any moral guilt, the war being just and lawful, yet they were brought under a ceremonial uncleanness, which rendred them unfit to come near the tabernacle till they were purified. Thus God would preserve in their minds a dread and detestation of murder. David must not build the temple because he had been a man of war and had shed blood, 1 Chr. xxviii. 3. (3.) They could not but have touched dead bodies, by which they were polluted, and that required they should be purified with the water of separation, ver. 19, 20, 24.

4. They must likewise purify the spoil they had taken; the captives, ver. 19, and all the goods, ver. 21, 22, 23. What would bear the fire must pass through the fire, and what would not must be washed with water. These things had been used by Midianites, and being now come into the possession of Israelites, it was fit they should be sanctified to the service of that holy nation, and the honour of their holy God. To us now every thing is sanctified by the word and prayer, if we are sanctified by the Spirit, who is compared both to fire and water. *To the pure all things are pure.*

25. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 26. Take the sum of the prey that was taken, *both* of man and of beast, thou and Eleazar the priest, and the chief fathers of the congregation: 27. And divide the prey into two parts; between them that took the war upon them, who went out to battle, and between all the congregation. 28. And levy a tribute unto the LORD, of the men of war which went out to battle: one soul of five hundred, *both* of the persons, and of the beeves, and of the asses, and of the sheep. 29. Take *it* of their half, and give *it* unto Eleazar the priest, for an heave-offering of the LORD. 30. And of the children of Israel's half, thou shalt take one portion of fifty, of the persons, of the beeves, of the asses, and of the flocks, of all manner of beasts, and give them unto the Levites, which keep the charge of the tabernacle of the LORD. 31. And Moses and Eleazar the priest did as the LORD commanded Moses. 32. And the booty, *being* the rest of the prey which the men of war had caught, was six hundred thousand, and seventy thousand, and five thousand sheep, 33. And threescore and twelve thousand beeves, 34. And threescore and one thousand asses, 35. And thirty and two thousand persons in all, of women that had not known man, by lying with him. 36. And the half, *which was* the portion of them that went out to war, was in number

number three hundred thousand, and seven and thirty thousand and five hundred sheep; 37. And the LORDS tribute of the sheep was six hundred and threescore and fifteen. 38. And the beeves *were* thirty and six thousand, of which the LORDS tribute *was* threescore and twelve. 39. And the asses *were* thirty thousand and five hundred, of which the LORDS tribute *was* threescore and one. 40. And the persons *were* sixteen thousand, of which the LORDS tribute *was* thirty and two persons. 41. And Moses gave the tribute *which was* the LORDS heave-offering, unto Eleazar the priest, as the LORD commanded Moses. 42. And of the children of Israels half, which Moses divided from the men that warred: 43. (Now the half *that pertained unto* the congregation, *was* three hundred thousand, and thirty thousand, and seven thousand, and five hundred sheep: 44. And thirty and six thousand beeves: 45. And thirty thousand asses and five hundred: 46. And sixteen thousand persons:) 47. Even of the children of Israels half, Moses took one portion of fifty, *both* of man and of beast, and gave them unto the Levites which kept the charge of the tabernacle of the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moses.

We have here the distribution of the spoil which was taken in this expedition against Midian. God himself directed how it should be done, and Moses and Eleazar did according to the directions. And thus unhappy contests among themselves were prevented; and the victory was made to turn to the common benefit. It was fit he that gave them the prey should order the disposal of it: all we have is from God, and therefore must be subject to his will.

1. The prey is ordered to be divided into two parts; one for the twelve thousand men that undertook the war, the other for the congregation. The prey that was divided seems to have been only the captives and the cattle; as for the plate, and jewels, and other goods, every man kept what he took, as is intimated, *ver.* 50—53. That only was distributed which would be of use for the stocking of that good land into which they were going. Now observe, 1. That the one half of the prey was given to the whole congregation, Moses allotting to each tribe its share, and then leaving it to the heads of the tribes to divide their respective shares among themselves; according to their families. The war was undertaken on the behalf of the whole congregation, they would all have been ready to go *to the help of the Lord against the mighty*, if they had been so ordered; and they did help, it is likely, by their prayers, and therefore God appoints that they that *tarried at home should divide the spoil*, *Psal.* lxxviii. 12. David in his time made it a *statute and an ordinance for Israel*, that as his part is that *goes down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarristh by the stuff*, *1 Sam.* xxx. 24, 25. Those that are employed in publick trusts, must not think to benefit themselves only by their toils and hazards, but must aim at the advantage of the community. 2. That yet the twelve thousand that went to the battle had as much for their share as the whole congregation, which were fifty times as many, had for theirs; so that the particular persons of the soldiery had a much better share than any of their brethren that tarried at home: and good reason they should. The greater pains we take, and the greater hazards we run, in the service of God and our generation, the greater will our recompence be at last; for *God is not unrighteous to forget the work and labour of love*.

2. God was to have a tribute out of it. As an acknowledgment of his sovereignty over them in general, and that he was their king, to whom *tribute was due*; and particularly of his interest in this war and the gains of it, he having given them their success; and that the priests, the Lord's receivers might have something added to the provision made for their maintenance. Note, Whatever we have God must have his dues out of it. And here (as before) the soldiers are favoured above the rest of the congregation, for out of the peoples share God required one in fifty, but of the soldiers share only one in five hundred; because the people got theirs easily, without any peril or fatigue. The less we have opportunity of honouring God with our personal services, the more it is expected we honour him with our substance. The tribute out of the soldiers half was given to the priests, *ver.* 29. That out of the peoples half was given to the Levites, *ver.* 30. For the priests were taken from among the Levites, as these soldiers from among the people, for special service, and hazardous, and their pay was accordingly.

48. ¶ And the officers which *were* over thousands of the host, the captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds came near unto Moses: 49. And they said unto Moses, Thy servants have taken the sum of the men of war which *are* under our charge, and there lacketh not one man of us. 50. We have therefore brought an ob-

lation for the LORD, what every man hath gotten of jewels of gold, chains, and bracelets, rings, ear-rings, and tablets, to make atonement for our souls before the LORD. 51. And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of them, *even* all wrought jewels. 52. And all the gold of the offering that they offered up to the LORD, of the captains of thousands, and of the captains of hundreds, was sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels. 53. (For the men of war had taken spoil, every man for himself) 54. And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of the captains of thousands, and of hundreds, and brought it into the tabernacle of the congregation, for a memorial for the children of Israel before the LORD.

Here is a great example of piety and devotion in the officers of the army; the colonels, that are called *captains of thousands*, and the inferior officers that were *captains of hundreds*; they came to Moses as their general and commander in chief; and, though he was now going off the stage, very humbly and respectfully addressed themselves to him, calling themselves his servants; the honours they had won did not puff them up, so as to make them forget their duty to him. Observe in their address to him,

1. The pious notice they take of God's wonderful goodness to them: in this late expedition, in preserving not only their own lives, but the lives of all the men of war that they had under their charge; so that upon the review of their muster-roll it appeared there was not one missing, *ver.* 49. This was very extraordinary, and perhaps cannot be paralleled in any history. So many thousand lives jeopardied in the high-places of the field; and not one lost, either by the sword of the enemy, or by any disease or disaster. This was *the Lords doing*, and cannot but be *marvellous in the eyes* of those that consider how the lives of all men, especially soldiers, are *continually in their hands*. It is an evidence of the tenderness these commanders had over their soldiers, and that their lives were very precious to them, that they looked upon it as a mercy to themselves, that none of those under their charge miscarried. *Of all that were given them they had lost none*; so precious also is the blood of Christ's subjects and soldiers unto him, *Psal.* lxxii. 14.

2. The pious acknowledgment they make for this favour, *ver.* 50. *Therefore we have brought an oblation to the Lord*. The oblation they brought was out of that which *every man had gotten*, and it was gotten honestly by a divine warrant. Thus every man should lay by, *according as God hath prospered him*, *1 Cor.* xvi. 1. For where God sows plentifully in the gifts of his bounty, he expects to reap accordingly in the fruits of our piety and charity. The tabernacle first, and the temple afterward, were beautified and enriched with the spoils taken from the enemies of Israel; as by David, *2 Sam.* viii. 11, 12. and his captains, *1 Chron.* xxvi. 26, 27. We should never take any thing to ourselves in war, or trade, which we cannot in faith consecrate a part of to God, who *bates robbery for burnt-offerings*; but when God has remarkably preserved and succeeded us, he expects we should make some particular return of gratitude to him.

As to this oblation, 1. The captains offered it to *make an atonement for their souls*, *ver.* 50. Instead of coming to Moses to demand of God a recompence for the good service they had done in *avenging the Lord of Midian*, or to set up trophies of their victory for the immortalizing of their own names, they bring an oblation to *make atonement for their souls*, being conscious to themselves, as the best men must be even in their best services, that they had been defective in their duty, not only in that instance for which they were reprov'd, *ver.* 14. but in many others; *for there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sins not*. 2. Moses accepted it, and laid it up in the tabernacle *as a memorial for the children of Israel*, *ver.* 54. *i. e.* a monument of God's goodness to them, that they might be encouraged to trust in him in their further wars; and a monument of their gratitude to God; (sacrifices are said to be memorials,) that he being well pleased with this thankful acknowledgment of favours bestowed, might continue and repeat his mercies to them.

C H A P. XXXII.

In this chapter we have, (1.) The humble request of the tribes of Reuben and Gad, for an inheritance on that side Jordan, where Israel now lay encamped, *ver.* 1—5. (2.) Moses's mis-interpreting of their request, *ver.* 6—15. (3.) Their explication of it, and stating it right, *ver.* 16—19. (4.) The grant of their petition under the proviso's and limitations, which they themselves proposed, *ver.* 20—42.

1. NOW the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle: and when they saw the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that behold, the place *was* a place for cattle; 2. The children of Gad, and the children of Reuben, came,

came, and spake unto Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation, saying, 3. A-taroth and Dibon, and Jazer, and Nimrah, and Hesh-bon, and Elealeh, and Shebam, and Nebo, and Beon, 4. *Even* the country which the LORD smote before the congregation of Israel, is a land for cattle, and thy servants have cattle. 5. Wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, *and* bring us not over Jor-dan. 6. ¶ And Moses said unto the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here? 7. And wherefore dis-courage ye the heart of the children of Israel, from go-ing over into the land which the LORD hath given them? 8. Thus did your fathers, when I sent them from Kadesh-Barnea to see the land. 9. For when they went up unto the valley of Eschol, and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, that they should not go into the land which the LORD had given them. 10. And the LORDS anger was kindled the same time, and he sware, saying, 11. Surely none of the men that came out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob; because they have not wholly followed me: 12. Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun: for they have wholly followed the LORD. 13. And the LORDS anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the LORD, was consumed. 14. And behold, ye are risen up in your fathers stead, an increase of sinful men, to augment yet the fierce anger of the LORD toward Is-rael. 15. For if ye turn away from after him, he will yet again leave them in the wilderness, and ye shall de-stroy all this people.

Israel's tents were now pitched in the plains of Moab, where they continued many months, looking back upon the conquests they had already made of the land of Sihon and Og, and looking forward to Canaan, which they hoped in a little time to make themselves masters of. While they made this stand, and were at a pause, this great affair of the disposal of the conquests they had already made was here concerted and settled, not by any particular order or appointment of God, but at the special instance and request of two of the tribes which Moses, after a long debate that arose upon it, consented to. For even then when so much was done by the extraordinary appearances of Divine providence, yet many things were left to the conduct of human prudence: for God, in governing both the world and the church, makes use of the reason of men, and serves his own purposes by it.

1. Here is a motion made by the Reubenites and Gadites, that the land they had lately possessed themselves of, and which in the right of conquest belonged to Israel in common, might be assign-ed to them in particular for their inheritance; upon the general idea they had of the Land of Promise, they supposed this would be about their proportion. Reuben and Gad were encamped un-der the same standard, and so had the better opportunity of com-paring notes, and agreeing this matter between themselves. In the first verse the children of Reuben are named first, but after-wards the children of Gad are, ver. 2, 25, 31. Either because the Gadites made the first motion, and were most forward for it, or because they were the better spokesmen, and had more of the art of management; Reuben's tribe still lying under Jacob's sen-tence, *he shall not excel*. Two things common in the world in-duced these tribes to make this choice, and this motion upon it, the *lust of the eye*, and the *pride of life*, 1 John ii. 16. (1.) The *lust of the eye*. This land they coveted was not only beautiful for situation, and pleasant to the eye, but it was good for food, food for cattle; and they had a great multitude of cattle, above the rest of the tribes. This is supposed, because they brought more out of Egypt than the rest did; that was forty years before, and stocks of cattle increase and decrease in less time than that; therefore I rather think, they had been better husbands of their cattle in the wilderness, had tended them better, had taken more care of the breed, and not been so profuse as their neighbours in eating the *lambs out of the flock*, and the *calves out of the midst of the stall*. Now they having these large stocks coveted land proportionable. Many scriptures speak of Bashan and Gilead as places famous for cattle; they had been so already, and therefore these tribes hoped they would be so to them, and whatever comes of it here they desire to take their lot. Judicious Calvin thinks there was much amiss in the principle they went upon, and that they consulted their own private convenience more than the publick good; that they had not such regard to the honour and interest of Israel, and the promise made to Abraham of the land of Canaan, (strictly so called) as they ought to have had. And still it is too true, that

many *seek their own things*, more than the *things of Jesus Christ*, Phil. ii. 21. And that many are influenced by their secular in-terest and advantage to take up short of the heavenly Canaan. Their spirits agree too well with this world, and with the things that are seen that are temporal, and they say, It is good to be here, and so lose what is hereafter for want of seeking it. Lot thus chose *by the sight of eye*, and smarted for his choice. Would we chuse our portion aright, we must look above the things that are seen. (2.) Perhaps, there was something of the pride of life in it. Reuben was the first-born of Israel, but he had lost his birthright, divers of the tribes, and Judah especially had topped him, so that he could not expect the best lot in Canaan; and therefore to save the shadow of a birthright when he had forfeited the substance, he here catches at the first lot, though it was out of Canaan, and far off from the tabernacle. Thus Esau sold his birthright, and yet got to be served first with an inheritance in mount Seir. The tribe of Gad descended from the first-born of Zilpah, and were like pretenders with the Reubenites; and Ma-nasseh too was a first-born, but knew he must be eclipsed by Ephraim his younger brother, and therefore he also coveted to get precedence.

2. Moses's dislike of this motion, and the severe rebuke he gives to it, as a faithful prince and prophet.

1. It must be confessed that, *prima facie*, the thing looked ill, especially the closing words of their petition, ver. 5. *Bring us not over Jordan*, (1.) It seemed to proceed from an ill principle; a contempt of the land of promise which Moses himself was so de-sirous of a sight of. A distrust of the power of God to dispossess the Canaanites; as if a lot in a land they knew, and which was already conquered, was more desirable than a lot in a land they knew not, and which was yet to be conquered; one bird in the hand worth two in the bush. There seemed to be covetousness in it, for that which they insisted on was, that it was convenient for their cattle. It argued likewise a neglect of their brethren, as if they cared not what became of Israel, while they themselves were well provided for. (2.) It might have been of ill consequence. The people might have taken ill hints from it, and have suggested that they were few enough when they had their whole number to deal with the Canaanites, but how unequal would the match be if they should drop two tribes and a half (above a fifth part of their strength) on this side Jordan. It would likewise be an ill prece-dent, if they must have the land thus granted them as soon as it was conquered, other tribes might make the same pretensions and claims, and so the regular disposition of the land by lot would be anticipated.

Moses is therefore very warm upon them, which is to be im-puted to his pious zeal against sin, and not to any peevishness, the effect of old age, for his meekness abated not, any more than his natural force.

1. He shews them what he apprehended to be evil in this mo-tion, that it would discourage the heart of their brethren, ver. 6, 7. What, saith he, with a holy indignation at their selfish-ness, *shall your brethren go to war*, and expose themselves to all the hardships and hazards of the field, and *shall you sit here* at your ease? No, do not mistake yourselves, you shall never be indulged by me in this sloth and cowardise. It ill becomes any of God's Israel to sit down unconcerned in the difficult and perilous con-cernments of their brethren, whether publick or personal.

2. He minds them of the fatal consequences of the unbelief and faint-heartedness of their fathers when they were, as these here, just ready to enter Canaan. He recites the story very particularly, ver. 8—13. *Thus did your fathers*, whose punishment should be a warning to you to take heed of sinning after the similitude of their transgression.

3. He gives them fair warning of the mischief that would be likely to follow upon this separation they were about to make from the camp of Israel; they would be in danger of bringing wrath upon the whole congregation, and hurrying them all back again into the wilderness, ver. 14, 15. *Ye are risen up in your fa-thers stead*, to despise the pleasant land and reject it as they did, when we hoped you were risen up in their stead to possess it: It was an encouragement to Moses to see what an increase of men they were, but a discouragement to see that they were withal an increase of sinful men, treading in the steps of their fathers im-piety. It is sad to see the rising generation in families and coun-tries seldom better and often worse than that which went before it; and what comes of it? Why, *it augments the fierce anger of the Lord*; not only continues that fire, but increaseth it, and fills the measure often till it overflow in a deluge of desolation. Note, If men did consider, as they ought, what would be in the end of sin, they would be afraid of the beginnings of it.

16. ¶ And they came near unto him, and said, We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones. 17. But we ourselves will go ready armed before the children of Israel, until we have brought them unto their place: and our little ones shall dwell in the fenced cities, because of the inhabitants of the land. 18. We will not return unto our houses, until the chil-dren of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance:

19. For

19. For we will not inherit with them on yonder side Jordan, or forward, because our inheritance is fallen to us on this side Jordan eastward. 20. ¶ And Moses said unto them, If ye will do this thing, if ye will go armed before the LORD to war, 21. And will go all of you armed over Jordan before the LORD, until he hath driven out his enemies from before him, 22. And the land be subdued before the LORD: then afterward ye shall return, and be guiltless before the LORD, and before Israel; and this land shall be your possession before the LORD. 23. But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out. 24. Build ye cities for your little ones, and folds for your sheep, and do that which hath proceeded out of your mouth. 25. And the children of Gad, and the children of Reuben spake unto Moses, saying, Thy servants will do as my lord commandeth. 26. Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our cattle shall be there in the cities of Gilead. 27. But thy servants will pass over, every man armed for war, before the LORD to battle, as my lord saith.

We have here the accommodating of the matter between Moses and the two tribes, about their settlement on this side Jordan. Probably, the petitioners withdrew and considered with themselves what answer they should return to the severe reproof Moses had given them; and after some consultation they return with this proposal, that their men of war should go and assist their brethren in the conquest of Canaan, and they would leave their families and flocks behind them in this land: and thus they might have their request, and no harm done.

Now it is uncertain whether they designed this at first when they brought their petition or no: (1.) If they did, it is an instance how often that which is honestly meant is unhappily misinterpreted. Yet Moses herein was excusable; for he had reason to suspect the worst by them; and the rebuke he gave them was from the abundance of his care to prevent sin. (2.) But if they did not, it is an instance of the good effect of plain dealing; Moses, by shewing them their sin and the danger of it, brought them to their duty without murmuring or disputing. They object not that their brethren were enough to deal with the Canaanites, without their help, especially since they were sure of God's fighting for them; but engage themselves to stand by them.

1. Their proposal is very fair and generous, and such as instead of discouraging would rather encourage their brethren. (1.) That their *men of war*, who were fit for service, would go *ready armed before the children of Israel* into the land of Canaan; so far would they be from deserting them, that if it were thought fit, they would lead them on, and be foremost in all dangerous enterprizes. So far were they from either distrusting or despising the conquest of Canaan, that they would assist in it with the utmost readiness and resolution. (2.) That they would leave their families and cattle behind them, who would have been but the incumbrance of their camp, and so they would be the more serviceable to their brethren, *ver. 16.* (3.) That they would not return to their possessions till the conquest of Canaan was completed, *ver. 18.* Their brethren should have their best help as long as they needed it. (4.) That yet they would not expect any share of the land that was yet to be conquered, *ver. 19.* *We will not desire to inherit with them*, nor under colour of assisting them in the war, put in for a share with them in the land; no we will be content with our inheritance on this side Jordan, and there will be so much the more on yonder side for them.

2. Moses thereupon grants their request, upon consideration they would stick to their proposals. (1.) He insists much upon it that they should never lay down their arms till their brethren laid down theirs. They promised to go armed *before the children of Israel*, *ver. 17.* Nay, saith Moses, Ye shall go armed *before the Lord*, *ver. 20, 21.* It is God's cause more than your brethrens, and to him you must have an eye, not to them only. *Before the Lord*, *i. e.* Before the ark of the Lord, the token of his presence, which it should seem they carried about with them in the wars of Canaan, and immediately before which these two tribes were posted, as we find in the order of their march, *Num. ii. 10, 17.* (2.) Upon this condition he grants them this land for their possession, and tells them they should be guiltless *before the Lord, and before Israel*, *ver. 22.* They should have the land, and neither sin nor blame cleaving to it; neither sin before God, nor blame before Israel; and whatever possessions we have it is desirable thus to come guiltless to them. But, (3.) He warns them of the danger of breaking their word, if you fail, you *sin against the Lord*, (*ver. 23.*) and not against your brethren only, and *be sure your sin will find you out*, *i. e.* God will certainly reckon with you for it, though you may make a light matter of it. Note, Sin will without doubt find out the sinner sooner or later. It concerns us therefore to find our sins out that we may repent of them, and forsake them, lest our sins find us out to our ruin and confusion.

3. They unanimously agree to the proviso's and conditions of the grant, and do as it were give bond for performance, by a solemn promise, *ver. 25.* *Thy servants will do as my lord commandeth.* Their brethren had all contributed their assistance to the conquest of this country, which they desired for a possession, and therefore they owned themselves obliged in justice to help them in the conquest of that which was to be their possession. Having received kindness we ought to return it, tho' it was not so conditioned when we received it. We may suppose this promise was understood on both sides, so as not to oblige all that were numbered of these tribes to go over armed, but those only that were fittest for the expedition who would be most serviceable, while it was necessary some should be left to till the ground, and guard the country; and accordingly that about forty thousand of the two tribes and a half went over armed, *Jos. iv. 13.* Whereas their whole number was about a hundred thousand.

28. So concerning them Moses commanded Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the chief fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel: 29. And Moses said unto them, If the children of Gad, and the children of Reuben will pass with you over Jordan, every man armed to battle before the LORD, and the land shall be subdued before you, then ye shall give them the land of Gilead for a possession: 30. But if they will not pass over with you armed, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan. 31. And the children of Gad, and the children of Reuben answered, saying, As the LORD hath said unto thy servants, so will we do. 32. We will pass over armed before the LORD into the land of Canaan, that the possession of our inheritance on this side Jordan may be ours. 33. And Moses gave unto them, even to the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben, and unto half the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, the kingdom of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land with the cities thereof, in the coasts, even the cities of the country round about. 34. ¶ And the children of Gad built Dibon, and Ataroth, and Aroer, 35. And Atroth, Shopan, and Jaazer, and Jogbehah, 36. And Bethnimrah, and Beth-haran, fenced cities: and folds for sheep. 37. And the children of Reuben built Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Kirjathaim, 38. And Nebo, and Baal-meon (their names being changed) and Shibmah: and gave other names unto the cities which they builded. 39. And the children of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead, and took it, and dispossessed the Amorite which was in it. 40. And Moses gave Gilead unto Machir the son of Manasseh, and he dwelt therein. 41. And Jair the son of Manasseh went and took the small towns thereof, and called them Havoth-Jair. 42. And Nobah went and took Kenath, and the villages thereof, and called it Nobah, after his own name.

Here 1. Moses settles this matter, with Eleazar, and with Joshua who was to be his successor, knowing that he himself must not live to see it perfected, *ver. 28, 29, 30.* He gives them an *estate upon condition*, leaving it to Joshua, if they fulfilled the condition to declare the estate absolute. If they will not go over with you, he doth not say, you shall give them no inheritance at all, but you shall not give them this inheritance which they covet. If their militia will not come over with you, compel the whole tribes to come over, and let them take their lot with their brethren, and fare as they fare; they shall have possessions in Canaan, and let them not expect that the lot will favour them. Hereupon they repeat their promise to stick to their brethren. *ver. 31, 32.*

2. Moses settles them in the land they desired. He gave it them, for a possession, *ver. 35.* Here is the first mention of the half tribe of Manasseh coming in with them for a share; probably, they had not joined with them in the petition, but the land when it came to be apportioned proving to be too much for them, this half tribe had a lot among them, either at their request, or by divine direction, or because they had signalized themselves in the conquest of this country; for the children of Machir, a stout and warlike family, had taken Gilead, and dispossessed the Amorites, *ver. 39.* Let them win it, and wear it; get it and take it. And they being celebrated for their courage and bravery, it was for the common safety to put them in this frontier country. Concerning the settlement of these tribes here. Observe (1.) that they built the cities, *i. e.* repaired them, because either they had been damaged by the war, or the Amorites had suffered them to go to decay. (2.) That they changed the names of them, *ver. 38.* Either to shew their authority, that the change of the names might signify the change of their owners; or because their names were idolatrous

idolatrous, and carried in them a respect to the dunghil deities that were there worshipped. Nebo and Baal were names of their gods, which they were forbidden to make mention of, *Exod. xxiii. 13.* and which, by changing the names of these cities, they endeavoured to bury in oblivion; and God promiseth to take away the names of Balaam out of the mouths of his people, *Hof. ii. 17.* Lastly, it is observable, that these tribes as they were now first placed before the other tribes, so long after they were displaced before the other tribes. We find that they were carried captive into Assyria some years before the other tribes, *2 Kings xxix.* Such a proportion doth providence sometimes observe, in balancing prosperity and adversity; he sets the one over-against the other.

C H A P. XXXIII.

In this chapter we have (1.) A particular account of the removes and encampments of the children of Israel from their escape out of Egypt to their entrance into Canaan; forty-two in all; with some remarkable events that happened at some of these places, ver. 1—49. (2.) A strict command given them to drive out all the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, which they were now going to conquer and take possession of, ver. 50—56. So that the former part of the chapter looks back upon their march through the wilderness, the latter looks forward to their settlement in Canaan.

1. **T**HESE are the journeys of the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt, with their armies, under the hand of Moses and Aaron. 2. And Moses wrote their goings out, according to their journeys, by the commandment of the LORD: and these are their journeys according to their goings out. 3. And they departed from Rameses, in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month: on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians. 4. (For the Egyptians buried all their first-born, which the LORD had smitten among them: upon their gods also the LORD executed judgments.) 5. And the children of Israel removed from Rameses, and pitched in Succoth. 6. And they departed from Succoth, and pitched in Etham, which is in the edge of the wilderness. 7. And they removed from Etham, and turned again unto Pihahiroth, which is before Baalzephon: and they pitched before Migdol. 8. And they departed from before Pihahiroth, and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, and went three days journey in the wilderness of Etham, and pitched in Marah. 9. And they removed from Marah, and came unto Elim; and in Elim were twelve fountains of water, and three-score and ten palm-trees, and they pitched there. 10. And they removed from Elim, and encamped by the Red sea. 11. And they removed from the Red sea, and encamped in the wilderness of Sin. 12. And they took their journey out of the wilderness of Sin, and encamped in Dophkah. 13. And they departed from Dophkah, and encamped in Alush. 14. And they removed from Alush, and encamped at Rephidim, where was no water for the people to drink. 15. And they departed from Rephidim, and pitched in the wilderness of Sinai. 16. And they removed from the desert of Sinai, and pitched at Kibroth-Hattaavah. 17. And they departed from Kibroth-Hattaavah, and encamped at Hazeroth. 18. And they departed from Hazeroth, and pitched in Rithmah. 19. And they departed from Rithmah, and pitched at Rimmon-Parez. 20. And they departed from Rimmon-Parez, and pitched in Libnah. 21. And they removed from Libnah, and pitched at Rissah. 22. And they journeyed from Rissah, and pitched in Kehelathah. 23. And they went from Kehelathah, and pitched in mount Shapher. 24. And they removed from mount Shapher, and encamped in Haradah. 25. And they removed from Haradah, and pitched in Makheloth. 26. And they removed from Makheloth, and encamped at Tahath. 27. And they departed from Tahath, and pitched at Tarah. 28. And they removed from Tarah, and pitched in Mithach. 29. And they went from Mithach, and pitched in Hashmonah. 30. And they departed from Hashmonah, and encamped at Moseroth. 31. And they departed from Moseroth, and pitched in Bene-jaakan. 32. And they removed from Bene-jaakan, and encamped at Hor-hagidgad. 33. And they went from Hor-hagidgad, and pitched in Jotbathah. 34. And they removed from Jotbathah, and en-

camped at Ebronah. 35. And then departed from Ebronah, and encamped at Ezion-gaber. 36. And they removed from Ezion-gaber, and pitched in the wilderness of Zin, which is Kadesh. 37. And they removed from Kadesh, and pitched in mount Hor, in the edge of the land of Edom. 38. And Aaron the priest went up into mount Hor, at the commandment of the LORD, and died there in the fortieth year after the children of Israel; were come out of the land of Egypt, in the first day of the fifth month. 39. And Aaron was an hundred and twenty and three years old, when he died in mount Hor. 40. And king Arad the Canaanite (which dwelt in the south, in the land of Canaan) heard of the coming of the children of Israel. 41. And they departed from mount Hor, and pitched in Zalmonah. 42. And they departed from Zalmonah, and pitched in Punon. 43. And they departed from Punon, and pitched in Oboth. 44. And they departed from Oboth, and pitched in Ije-abarim, in the border of Moab. 45. And they departed from Iim, and pitched in Dibon-Gad. 46. And they removed from Dibon-Gad, and encamped in Almon-dib-lathaim. 47. And they removed from Almon-dib-lathaim, and pitched in the mountains of Abarim before Nebo. 48. And they departed from the mountains of Abarim, and pitched in the plains of Moab, by Jordan near Jericho. 49. And they pitched by Jordan from Beth-jeshimoth, even unto Abel-shittim, in the plains of Moab.

This is a review, and brief rehearsal, of the travels of the children of Israel through the wilderness; it was a memorable history and well worthy to be thus abridged, and the abridgment thus preserved to the honour of God that led them, and for the encouragement of the generations that followed. Observe here,

1. How the account was kept, *ver. 2.* *Moses wrote their goings out.* When they began this tedious march God ordered him to keep a journal, or diary, and to insert in it all the remarkable occurrences of their way, that it might be a satisfaction to himself in the review, and an instruction to others, when it should be published. It may be of good use for private Christians, but especially for those in publick stations, to preserve in writing an account of the providences of God concerning them, the constant series of mercies they have experienced, especially those turns and changes which have made some days of their lives more remarkable. Our memories are deceitful and need this help, that we may remember all the way which the Lord our God has led us in this wilderness, *Deut. viii. 2.*

2. What the account it self was. It began with their departure out of Egypt, continued with their march through the wilderness, and ended in the plains of Moab, where they now lay encamped.

1. Some things are observed here concerning their departure out of Egypt, which they are minded of upon all occasions, as a work of wonder never to be forgotten. (1.) That they went forth with their armies, *ver. 1.* rank and file, as an army with banners. (2.) Under the hand of Moses and Aaron, their guides, overseers, and rulers, under God. (3.) With a high hand, because God's hand was high that wrought for them, and in the sight of all the Egyptians, *ver. 3.* They did not steal away clandestinely, (*Isa. lii. 12.*) but in defiance of their enemies, to whom God had made them such a burdensome stone, that they neither could, nor would, nor durst, oppose them. (4.) They went forth while the Egyptians were burying, or at least preparing to bury, their first-born, *ver. 4.* they had a mind good enough (or ill enough rather) still to have detained the Israelites their prisoners, but God found them other work to do. They would have God's first-born buried alive, but God set them a burying their own first-born. (5.) To all the plagues of Egypt it is added here, that on their gods also the Lord executed judgments. Their idols which they worshipped, it is probable, were broken down, as Dagon afterwards before the ark, so that they could not consult them about this great affair. To this perhaps there is reference, *Isa. xix. 1.* *The idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence.*

2. Concerning their travels towards Canaan.

Observe, 1. They were continually upon the remove. When they had pitched a little while in one place, they had departed from that to another. Such is our state in this world; we have here no continuing city. 2. Most of their way lay through a wilderness, uninhabited, untracked, unfurnished even with the necessities of human life, which magnifies the wisdom and power of God, by whose wonderful conduct and bounty the thousands of Israel not only subsisted for forty years in that desolate place, but came out at least as numerous and vigorous as they went in. At first they pitched in the edge of the wilderness, *ver. 6.* but afterwards in the heart of it; by lesser difficulties God prepares his people for greater. We find them in the wilderness of Etham, *ver. 8.* of Sin, *ver. 11.* of Sinai, *ver. 15.* our removes in this world are but from one wilderness to another. 3. That they were led to and fro, forward and backward, as in a maze or labyrinth,

byrith, and yet were all the while under the direction of the pillar of cloud and fire. He led them about, *Deut.* xxxii. 10. and yet led them the right way, *Psal.* cvii. 7. the way God takes in bringing his people to himself is always the best way, tho' it doth not always seem to us the next way. 4. Some events are mentioned in this journal, as their want of water at Rephidim, *ver.* 14. the death of Aaron, *ver.* 38, 39. the insult of Arad, *ver.* 40. and the very name of Kibroth-hattaavah, the graves of lusters, *ver.* 16. has a story depending upon it. Thus we ought to keep in mind the providences of God concerning us and our families, us and our land; and the many instances of that divine care which has led us, and fed us, and kept us all our days hitherto. Shittim, the place where the people sinned in the matter of Peor, *chap.* xxv. 1. is here called Abel-shittim; Abel signifies mourning, (as *Gen.* i. 11.) and probably this place was so called from the mourning of the good people of Israel for that sin, and God's wrath against them for it. It was so great a mourning that it gave a name to the place.

50. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, in the plains of Moab, by Jordan near Jericho, saying, 51. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are passed over Jordan into the land of Canaan; 52. Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places. 53. And ye shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land, and dwell therein: for I have given you the land to possess it. 54. And ye shall divide the land by lot for an inheritance among your families, and to the more ye shall give the more inheritance, and to the fewer ye shall give the less inheritance: every mans inheritance shall be in the place where his lot falleth; according to the tribes of your fathers ye shall inherit. 55. But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them, shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell. 56. Moreover, it shall come to pass, that I shall do unto you, as I thought to do unto them.

While the children of Israel were in the wilderness their total separation from all other people, kept them out of the way of temptation to idolatry, and perhaps that was one thing intended to their long confinement to the wilderness, that thereby the idols of Egypt might be forgotten, and the people aired (as it were) and purified from that infection, and the generation that entered Canaan might be such as never knew those depths of Satan. But now they were to pass over Jordan, they were entering again into that temptation, and therefore,

1. They are here strictly charged utterly to destroy all the remnants of idolatry; they must not only drive out the inhabitants of the land, that they might possess their country, but they must deface all their idolatrous pictures, and images, and pull down all their high places, *ver.* 52. They must not preserve any of them, no not as monuments of antiquity, to gratify the curious, or as ornaments of their houses, or toys for their children to play, but they must destroy all; both in token of their abhorrence and detestation of idolatry, and to prevent their being tempted either to worship those images, and the false gods represented by them, or to worship the God of Israel by such images or representations.

2. They are assured that if they did so, God would by degrees put them in full possession of the land of promise, *ver.* 53, 54. If they would keep themselves pure from the idols of Canaan, God would enrich them with the wealth of Canaan. Learn not their way, and then fear not their power.

3. They are threatened that if they spared either the idols or the idolaters, they should be beaten with their own rod, and their sin would certainly be their punishment. (1.) They would foster snakes in their own bosoms, *ver.* 55. The remnant of the Canaanites, if they made any league with them, though it were but a cessation of arms, would be pricks in their eyes, and thorns in their sides, i. e. they would be upon all occasions vexatious to them insulting them, robbing them, and, to the utmost of their power, making mischief among them. We must expect trouble and affliction from that, whatever it is, which we sinfully indulge; that which we are willing should tempt us, we shall find will vex us. (2.) The righteous God would turn that wheel upon the Israelites which was to have crushed the Canaanites, *ver.* 56. I shall do to you, as I thought to do unto them. It was intended that the Canaanites should be dispossessed, but if the Israelites fell in with them, and learned their way, they should be dispossessed, for God's displeasure would justly be greater against them than the Canaanites themselves. Let us hear this and fear. If we do not drive sin out, sin will drive us out; if we be not the death of our lusts, our lusts will be the death of our souls.

C H A P. XXXIV.

In this chapter God directs Moses, and he is to direct Israel. 1. Concerning the bounds and borders of the land of Canaan, *ver.* 1—15. Concerning the division and distribution of it to the tribes of Israel, *ver.* 16—24.

1. AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land of Canaan (this is the land that shall fall unto you for an inheritance, even the land of Canaan, with the coasts thereof) 3. Then your south quarter shall be from the wilderness of Zin, along by the coast of Edom, and your south border shall be the utmost coast of the salt-sea eastward. 4. And your border shall turn from the south, to the ascent of Akrabbim, and pass on to Zin; and the going forth thereof shall be from the south to Kadesh-Barnea, and shall go on to Hazar-Adda, and pass on to Azmon. 5. And the border shall fetch a compass from Azmon unto the river of Egypt, and the goings out of it shall be at the sea. 6. And as for the western border, you shall even have the great sea for a border, this shall be your west border. 7. And this shall be your north border: from the great sea, you shall point out for you mount Hor. 8. From mount Hor, ye shall point out your border unto the entrance of Hamath: and the goings forth of the border shall be at Zedad. 9. ¶ And the border shall go on to Ziphron, and the goings out of it shall be at Hazar-Enan: this shall be your north border. 10. And ye shall point out your east border, from Hazar-Enan to Shepham. 11. And the coast shall go down from Shepham to Riblah, on the east side of Ain: and the border shall descend, and shall reach unto the side of the sea of Chinnereth eastward. 12. And the border shall go down to Jordan, and the goings out of it shall be at the salt-sea: this shall be your land with the coasts thereof round about. 13. And Moses commanded the children of Israel, saying, This is the land which ye shall inherit by lot, which the LORD commanded to give unto the nine tribes, and to the half tribe. 14. For the tribe of the children of Reuben, according to the house of their fathers, and the tribe of the children of Gad, according to the house of their fathers, have received their inheritance, and half the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance. 15. The two tribes, and the half tribe have received their inheritance on this side Jordan, near Jericho, eastward, toward the sun-rising.

We have here a particular draught of the line, by which the land of Canaan was meted, and bounded, on all sides. God directs Moses to settle it here, not as a Geographer in his map, only to please the curious, but as a prince in his grant, that it may be certainly known what passeth and is conveyed by the grant. There was a much larger possession promised them, which in due time they should be possessed of, if they had been obedient, reaching even to the river Euphrates, *Deut.* xi. 24. And even so far the dominion of Israel did extend in David's time and Solomon's, *2 Chron.* ix. 26. But this here described is Canaan only, which was the lot of the nine tribes and a half, for the other two and a half were already settled, *ver.* 14, 15. Now concerning the limits of Canaan observe, 1. That it was limited within certain bounds: for God appointeth the bounds of our habitation, *Acts* xvii. 26. The borders are set them, (1.) That they might know whom they were to dispossess, and how far their commission extended which was given them, *chap.* xxxiii. 53. That they should drive out the inhabitants. Those that lay within these borders, and those only they must destroy; hitherto their bloody sword must go, and no further. (2.) That they might know what to expect the possession of themselves. God would not have his people to enlarge their desire of worldly possessions, but to know when they have enough, and to rest satisfied with it. The Israelites themselves must not be placed alone in the midst of the earth, but must leave room for their neighbours to live by them. God sets bounds to our lot, let us then set bounds to our desires, and bring our mind to our condition.

2. That it lay (comparatively) in a very little compass; as it is here bounded, it is reckoned to be but about one hundred and sixty miles in length, and about fifty in breadth; perhaps it did not contain past half as much ground as England; and yet this is the country which was promised to the father of the faithful, and was the possession of the seed of Israel. This was that little spot of ground in which, duly for many ages, God was known and his name

name was great, Psal. lxxvi. 1. This was the vineyard of the Lord, the garden inclosed; but as it is with gardens and vineyards, the narrowness of the extent was abundantly made by the extraordinary fruitfulness of the soil; otherwise it could not have subsisted so numerous a nation as did inhabit it. See here then, (1.) How little a part of the world God hath for himself; tho' the earth is his and the fulness thereof, yet few have the knowledge of him, and serve him; but those few are happy, very happy, because fruitful to God. (2.) How little a share of the world God often gives to his own people. They that have their portion in heaven, have reason to be content with a small pittance of this earth; but as here what is wanting in quantity is made up in quality; a little that a righteous man has, having it from the love of God, and with his blessing, is far better and more comfortable than the riches of many wicked, Psal. xxxvii. 16.

3. It is observable what the bounds and limits of it were. 1. Canaan was itself a pleasant land, (so it is called, Dan. viii. 9.) and yet it butted upon wildernesses and seas, and was surrounded with divers melancholy prospects. Thus the vineyard of the church is compassed on all hands with the desert of this world, which serves as a foil to it to make it appear the more beautiful for situation. 2. Many of its borders were its defences, and natural fortifications, to render the accesses of its enemies the more difficult; to intimate to them that the God of nature was their protector, and with his favour would compass them as with a shield. 3. The border reached to the river of Egypt, ver. 5. that the sight of that country which they could look into out of their own, might mind them of their bondage there, and their wonderful deliverance thence. 4. Their border is here made to begin at the Salt-Sea, ver. 3. and there it ends, ver. 12. That was the remaining lasting monument of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; that pleasant fruitful vale in which these cities stood became a lake, which was never stirred by any wind, bore no vessels, was replenished with no fish, no living creature of any sort being found in it, therefore called the Dead Sea; this was part of their border, that it might be a constant warning to them to take heed of those sins which had been the ruin of Sodom; yet the iniquity of Sodom was afterwards found in Israel, Ezek. xvi. 49. For which Canaan was made, though not a salt sea as Sodom, yet a barren soil, and continues so to this day. 5. Their western border was the Great Sea, (ver. 6.) which is now called the Mediterranean. Some make that sea itself to be a part of their possession, and that by virtue of this grant they had the dominion of it, and if they had not forfeited it by sin might have rode masters of it.

16. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 17. These are the names of the men, which shall divide the land unto you, Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun. 18. And ye shall take one prince of every tribe to divide the land by inheritance. 19. And the names of the men are these: of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh. 20. And of the tribe of the children of Simeon, Shemuel the son of Ammihud. 21. Of the tribe of Benjamin, Elidad the son of Chislon. 22. And the prince of the tribe of the children of Dan, Bukki the son of Jogli. 23. The prince of the children of Joseph: for the tribe of the children of Manasseh, Hanniel the son of Ephod. 24. And the prince of the tribe of the children of Ephraim, Kemuel the son of Shiphtan. 25. And the prince of the tribe of the children of Zebulun, Elizaphan the son of Parnach. 26. And the prince of the tribe of the children of Issachar, Paltiel the son of Azzan. 27. And the prince of the tribe of the children of Ashur, Ahihud the son of Shelomi. 28. And the prince of the tribe of the children of Naphtali, Pedahel the son of Ammihud. 29. These are they whom the LORD commanded to divide the inheritance unto the children of Israel, in the land of Canaan.

God here appoints commissioners for the dividing of the land to them. The conquest of it is taken for granted, though as yet there was never a stroke struck towards it; here is no nomination of the generals and commanders in chief that should carry on the war; for they were to get the land in possession, not by their own sword or bow, but by the power and favour of God, and so confident must they be of victory and success while God fought for them, that the persons must now be named who should be intrusted with the dividing of the land; i. e. who should preside in casting the lots, and determine controversies that might arise, and see that all was done fairly.

1. The principal commissioners, who were of the Quorum, were Eleazar, and Joshua, ver. 17. typifying Christ, who as priest and king divides the heavenly Canaan to the spiritual Israel; yet as they were to go by the lot, so Christ acknowledgeth the

disposal must be by the will of the Father, Mat. xx. 23. compare Eph. i. 11.

2. Besides these, that there might be no suspicion of partiality, a prince of each tribe was appointed to inspect this matter, and to see that the tribe he served for was no way injured. Publick affairs should be so managed, as not only to give right to all, but, if possible, to give satisfaction to all that they have right done them. It is a happiness to a land to have the princes of their people meet together, some out of every tribe, to concert the affairs that are of common concern; a constitution which is the abundant honour, ease and safety of the nation that is blessed with it.

Some observe, that the order of tribes here very much differs from that in which they had hitherto, upon all occasions, been named; and agrees with the neighbourhood of their lots in the division of the land. Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin, the three first here named, lay close together: the inheritance of Dan lay next them on one side, and that of Ephraim and Manasseh on another side, Zebulun and Issachar lay abreast more northerly; and lastly, Asher and Naphtali most northward of all, as is easy to observe in looking over a map of Canaan; this (saith bishop Patrick) is an evidence that Moses was guided by a divine spirit in his writings. Known unto God are all his works before hand, and what is new and surprizing to us he presently foresaw, without any confusion or uncertainty.

C H A P. XXXV.

Orders having been given before for the dividing of the land of Canaan among the lay-tribes, (as I may call them) care is here taken for a competent provision for the clergy, the tribe of Levi, which ministered in holy things. 1. Forty-eight cities were to be assigned them, with their suburbs, some in every tribe, ver. 1—8. 2. Six cities out of these were to be for cities of refuge, for any man that killed another at unawares, ver. 9—15. In the law concerning these, observe, 1. In what cases sanctuary was not allowed, not in case of wilful murder, ver. 16—21. 2. In what cases it was allowed, ver. 20—24. 3. What was the law concerning those that took shelter in these cities of refuge, ver. 25—34.

1. AND the LORD spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab, by Jordan near Jericho, saying, 2. Command the children of Israel, that they give unto the Levites of the inheritance of their possession, cities to dwell in: and ye shall give also unto the Levites suburbs for the cities round about them. 3. And the cities shall they have to dwell in, and the suburbs of them shall be for their cattle, and for their goods, and for all their beasts. 4. And the suburbs of the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites, shall reach from the wall of the city and outward, a thousand cubits round about. 5. And ye shall measure from without the city on the east side two thousand cubits, and on the south side two thousand cubits, and on the west two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits: and the city shall be in the midst: this shall be to them the suburbs of the cities. 6. And among the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites, there shall be six cities for refuge, which ye shall appoint for the man-slayer, that he may flee thither: and to them ye shall add forty and two cities. 7. So all the cities which ye shall give to the Levites, shall be forty and eight cities: them shall ye give with their suburbs. 8. And the cities which ye shall give, shall be of the possession of the children of Israel: from them that have many, ye shall give many; but from them that have few, ye shall give few. Every one shall give of his cities unto the Levites, according to his inheritance, which he inheriteth.

The laws about the tithes and offerings had provided very plentifully for the maintenance of the Levites, but it was not to be thought, nor indeed was it for the publick good, that when they came to Canaan they should all live about the tabernacle, as they had done in the wilderness, and therefore care must be taken to provide habitations for them; in which they might live comfortably and usefully. That is it which is here taken care of.

1. Cities were allotted them with their suburbs, ver. 2. they were not to have any ground for tillage; they needed not to sow, or reap, or gather into barns, for their heavenly Father fed them with the tithe of the increase of other peoples labours, that they might the more closely attend the study of the law, and might have more leisure to teach the people; for they were not sed thus easily that they might live in idleness, but that they might give themselves wholly to the business of their profession, and not to be entangled in the affairs of this life. (1.) Cities were

were allotted them that they might live near together, and converse with one another about the law, to their mutual edification; and that in doubtful cases they might consult one another, and in all cases strengthen one another's hands. (2.) These cities had suburbs annexed to them, for their cattle, *ver.* 3. a thousand cubits from the wall was allowed them for out-housing to keep their cattle in, and then two thousand more for fields to graze their cattle in, *ver.* 4, 5. Thus was care taken that they should not only live, but live plentifully, and have all desirable conveniences about them, that they might not be looked upon with contempt by their neighbours.

2. These cities were to be assigned them out of the possessions of each tribe, *ver.* 8. (1.) That each tribe might thus make a grateful acknowledgment to God out of their real as well as out of their personal estates; for what was given to the Levites was accepted, as given to the Lord; and thus their possessions were sanctified to them. (2.) That each tribe might have the benefit of the Levites dwelling among them, to *teach them the good knowledge of the Lord*; thus that light was diffused through all parts of the country, and none left to sit in darkness, *Deut.* xxxiii. 10. *They shall teach Jacob thy judgments.* Jacob's curse on Levi's anger was, *I will scatter them in Israel*, *Gen.* xlv. 7. But that curse was turned into a blessing, and the Levites by being thus scattered were put into a capacity of doing so much the more good. It is a great mercy to a country to be replenished in all parts with faithful ministers. The number allotted them was forty-eight in all; four out of each of the twelve tribes one with another. Out of the united tribes of Simeon and Judah nine, out of Naphtali three, and four apiece out of all the rest, as appears, *Josh.* xxi. Thus were they blessed with a good ministry, and that ministry with a comfortable maintenance, not only in tithes, but in glebe lands. And though the gospel is not so particular, as the law was in this matter, yet it expressly proves that he that is *taught in the word*, should *communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things*, *Gal.* vi. 6.

9. ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 10. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come over Jordan, into the land of Canaan: 11. Then ye shall appoint your cities to be cities of refuge for you, that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares. 12. And they shall be unto you cities for refuge from the avenger, that the man-slayer die not, until he stand before the congregation in judgment. 13. And of these cities which ye shall give, six cities shall ye have for refuge. 14. Ye shall give three cities on this side Jordan, and three cities shall ye give in the land of Canaan, *which* shall be cities of refuge. 15. These six cities shall be a refuge, *both* for the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them: that every one that killeth any person unawares, may flee thither. 16. And if he smite him with an instrument of iron (so that he die) he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. 17. And if he smite him with throwing a stone, (wherewith he may die) and he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. 18. Or if he smite him with an hand weapon of wood (wherewith he may die) and he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. 19. The revenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer: when he meeteth him he shall slay him. 20. But if he thrust him of hatred, or hurl at him by laying of wait, that he die: 21. Or in enmity smite him with his hand, that he die, he that smote him shall surely be put to death, for he is a murderer: the revenger of blood shall slay the murderer, when he meeteth him. 22. But if he thrust him suddenly without enmity, or have cast upon him any thing without laying of wait: 23. Or with any stone wherewith a man may die, seeing him not, and cast it upon him that he die, and *was* not his enemy, neither sought his harm: 24. Then the congregation shall judge between the slayer, and the revenger of blood according to these judgments. 25. And the congregation shall deliver the slayer out of the hand of the revenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to the city of his refuge, whither he was fled: and he shall abide in it, unto the death of the high priest, which was anointed with the holy oil. 26. But if the slayer shall at any time come without the border of the city of his refuge, whither he was fled; 27. And the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill the slayer; he shall not be guilty of blood: 28. Because he should have remained in the city of his refuge, until the death of the

high priest: but after the death of the high priest, the slayer shall return into the land of his possession. 29. So these things shall be for a statute of judgment unto you, throughout your generations in all your dwellings. 30. Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death, by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person, *to cause him to die.* 31. Moreover, ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death; but he shall be surely put to death. 32. And ye shall take no satisfaction for him that is fled to the city of his refuge, that he should come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest. 33. So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are: for blood, it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it. 34. Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel.

We have here the orders given concerning the cities of refuge, fitly annexed to what goes before, because they were all Levites cities. In this part of the constitution there is a great deal both of good law and pure gospel.

(1.) Here is a great deal of good law, in the case of murder and manslaughter, a case which the laws of all nations have taken particular cognizance of. It is here enacted and provided consonant to natural equity.

1. That wilful murder should be punished with death, and in that case no sanctuary should be allowed, no ransom taken, nor any commutation of the punishment accepted; the murderer shall surely be put to death, *ver.* 16. It is supposed to be done of hatred, *ver.* 20. or in enmity, *ver.* 21. upon a sudden provocation, (for our Saviour makes rash anger, as well as malice pre-pense, to be murder, *Mat.* v. 21, 22.) whether the person be murdered with an instrument of iron, *ver.* 16. or wood, *ver.* 18. or with a stone thrown at him, *ver.* 17, 20. nay, if he smite him with his hand in enmity, and death ensue, it is murder, *ver.* 21. and it was an ancient law consonant to the law of nature, that *whoso sheds mans blood, by man shall his blood be shed.* *Gen.* ix. 6. Where wrong has been done, restitution must be made; and since the murderer cannot restore the life he has wrongfully taken away, his own must be exacted from him in lieu of it, not (as some have fancied) to satisfy the man's or ghost of the person slain, but to satisfy the law, and the justice of a nation, and to be a warning to all others not to do likewise. It is here said, and it is well worthy the consideration of all princes and states, that blood defileth not only the conscience of the murderer, who is thereby proved *not to have eternal life, abiding in him*, 1 Joh. iii. 15. but also the land in which it is shed; so very offensive is it to God, and all good men, and the worst of natures. And it is added, that *the land cannot be cleansed* from the blood of the murdered, but by the blood of the murderer, *ver.* 33. If murderers escape punishment from men, they that suffer them to escape will have a great deal to answer for, and God however will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgments. Upon the same principle it is provided, that no satisfaction should be taken for the life of the murderer, *ver.* 31. *If a man would give all the substance of his house to the judges, to the country, or to the avenger of blood, to atone for his crime, it must utterly be contemned.* The redemption of the life is so precious that it cannot be obtained by the multitude of riches, *Psal.* xlix. 7, 8. which perhaps may allude to this law. A rule of law comes in here, (which is a rule of our law in case of treason only) that no man shall be put to death upon the testimony of one witness, but it was necessary there should be two, *ver.* 30. this law is settled in all capital causes, *Deut.* xvii. 6.—xix. 15. and lastly, not only the prosecution, but the execution, of the murderer is committed to the next of kin, who as he was to be the redeemer of his kinsman's estate if it were mortgaged, so he was to be the avenger of his blood if he were murdered, *ver.* 19. *the avenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer*, if he were convicted by the notorious evidence of the fact, and he needed not to have recourse by a judicial process to the court of judgment. But if it were uncertain who the murderer was, and the proof doubtful, we cannot think that his bare suspicion, or surmise, would empower him to do that which the judges themselves could not do, but upon the testimony of two witnesses. Only if the fact were plain, then the next heir of the person slain might himself, in a just indignation, slay the murderer wherever he met him. Some think, this must be understood to be after the lawful judgment of the magistrate, and so the Chaldee saith, he shall slay him, *when he shall be condemned unto him by judgment*; but it should seem by *ver.* 24. that the judges interposed only in a doubtful case, and that if the person on whom he took vengeance were indeed the murderer, and a wilful murderer, the avenger was innocent, (*ver.* 27.) only if it proved otherwise it was at his peril. Our law allows an appeal to be brought against a murderer, by the widow, or next heir of the person murdered,

murdered, yea tho' the murthurer have been acquitted upon an indictment; and if the murthurer be found guilty upon that appeal, execution shall be awarded at the suit of the appellant, who may properly be called *the avenger of blood*.

2. But if the murthurer were not voluntary, nor done designedly, if it were *without enmity, or lying in wait*, ver. 20. not *seeking him, or seeking his harm*, ver. 23. which our law calls chance-medley, or homicide *per infortunium*, in this case there were cities of refuge appointed for the man-slayer to flee to. By our law this incurs a forfeiture of goods; but a pardon is granted of course upon the special matter found.

Concerning the cities of refuge the law was,

1. That if a man killed another, in these cities he was safe, and under the protection of the law, till he had his trial *before the congregation, i. e. before the judges in open court*. If he neglected thus to surrender himself, it was at his peril, if the avenger of blood met him elsewhere, or over-took him loitering in his way to the city of refuge, and slew him, his blood was upon his own head, because he did not make use of the security God had provided for him.

2. If upon trial it was found to be wilful murder, the city of refuge should no longer be a protection to him, it was already determined, *Exod. xxi. 14. Thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die*.

3. But if it were found to be by error or accident, and that the stroke was given without any design upon the life of the person slain, or any other; then the man-slayer should continue safe in the city of refuge, and the avenger of blood might not meddle with him, *ver. 25*. There he was to remain in banishment from his own house and patrimony, *till the death of the high-priest*; and if at any time he went out of that city or the suburbs of it, he put himself out of the protection of this law, and the avenger of blood, if he met him, might slay him, *ver. 26, 27, 28*. Now, (1.) By the preservation of the life of the man-slayer, God would teach us, that men ought not to suffer for that which is rather their unhappiness than their crime, rather the act of providence than their own art, for *God delivered him into his hand*, *Exod. xxi. 13*. (2.) By the banishment of the man-slayer from his own city, and the confinement of him to the city of refuge, where he was in a manner a prisoner, God would teach us to conceive a dread and horror of the guilt of blood, and to be very careful of life, and always afraid lest by over-sight, or negligence, we occasion the death of any. (3.) By the limiting of the time of the offender's banishment, to the death of the high-priest, an honour was put upon that sacred office. The high-priest was to be looked upon as so great a blessing to his country, that when he died, their sorrow upon that occasion should swallow up all other resentments. The cities of refuge being all of them Levites cities, and the high-priest being the head of that tribe, and consequently having a peculiar dominion over those cities, those that were confined to them might properly be looked upon as his prisoners, and so his death must be their discharge; it was, as it were, at his suit that the delinquent was imprisoned, and therefore at his death it fell; *Alio moritur cum persona*. Ainsworth has another notion of it, That as the high-priests, while they lived, by their service and sacrificing made atonement for sin, wherein they figured Christ's satisfaction; so, at their death, those were released that had been exiled for casual murder, which typified redemption in Israel. 4. By the abandoning of the prisoner to the avenger of blood, in case he at any time went out of the limits of the city of refuge, they were taught to adhere to the methods infinite wisdom prescribed for their security. It was for the honour of a remedial law, that it should be so strictly observed. How can we expect to be saved, if we neglect the salvation, which is indeed a great salvation!

2. Here is a great deal of good gospel couched under the type and figure of the cities of refuge; and to them the apostle seems to allude, when he speaks of our *flying for refuge to the hope set before us*, *Heb. vi. 18*. and being *found in Christ*, *Phil. iii. 9*. We never read in the history of the Old Testament, of any use made of those cities of refuge, no more than of other such institutions, which yet no doubt were made use of upon the occasions intended; only we read of those, that, in dangerous cases, took hold of the horns of the altar, (*1 Kings i. 50.—ii. 28.*) for the altar, where-ever that was, was, as it were, the capital city of refuge. But the law concerning these cities was designed both to raise, and to encourage the expectations of those who looked for redemption in Israel, which should be to those who were convinced of sin, and in terror by reason of it, as the cities of refuge were to the man-slayer. Observe (1.) There were several cities of refuge, and they were so appointed in several parts of the country, that the man-slayer wherever he dwelt in the land of Israel, might in half a day reach one or other of them; so tho' there is but one Christ appointed for our refuge, yet wherever we are he is a refuge at hand, a very present help, for *the word is nigh us*, and Christ in the word. (2.) The man-slayer was safe in any of these cities; so in Christ believers that fly to him, and rest in him, are protected from the wrath of God and the curse of the law. *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*, *Rom. viii. 1*. Who shall condemn those that are thus sheltered? (3.) They were all Levites cities; it was a kindness to the poor

No. xii.

prisoner, that though he might not go up to the place where the ark was, yet he was in the midst of Levites, who would teach him the good knowledge of the Lord, and instruct him how to improve the providence he was now under: It might also be expected, that the Levites would comfort and encourage him, and bid him welcome; so it is the work of gospel-ministers to bid poor sinners welcome to Christ, and to assist and counsel those that through grace are in him. (4.) Even strangers and sojourners, tho' they were not native Israelites, might take the benefit of these cities of refuge, *ver. 15*. So in Christ Jesus no difference is made between Greek and Jew, even the *sons of the stranger*, that by faith fly to Christ shall be safe in him. (5.) Even the suburbs or borders of the city were a sufficient security to the offender, *ver. 26, 27*. So there is virtue, even in the hem of Christ's garment, for the healing and saving of poor sinners. If we cannot reach to a full assurance, we may comfort ourselves in a good hope through grace. (6.) The protection which the man-slayer found in the city of refuge, was not owing to the strength of its walls, or gates, or bars, but purely to the Divine appointment, so it is the word of the gospel that gives souls safety in Christ; *for him hath God the Father sealed*. (7.) If the offender were ever caught straggling out of the borders of his city of refuge, or stealing home to his own house again, he lost the benefit of his protection, and lay exposed to the avenger of blood; so those that are in Christ must abide in Christ, for it is at their peril if they forsake him, and wander from him. *Drawing back is to perdition*.

C H A P. XXXVI.

We have in this chapter the determination of another question, that arose upon the case of the daughters of Zelophehad. God had appointed that they should inherit, chap. xxvii. 7. Now here, 1. An inconvenience is suggested, in case they should marry to any other tribe, *ver. 1, 4*. 2. It is prevented by a Divine appointment, that they should marry in their own tribe, and family, *ver. 5—7*. and this is settled for a rule in like cases, *ver. 8, 9*. and they did marry accordingly to some of their own relations, *ver. 10—12*. and with this the book concludes, *ver. 13*.

1. **A**ND the chief fathers of the families of the children of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of the sons of Joseph, came near, and spake before Moses, and before the princes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel. 2. And they said, The LORD commanded my lord to give the land for an inheritance by lot to the children of Israel: and my lord was commanded by the LORD to give the inheritance of Zelophehad our brother, unto his daughters. 3. And if they be married to any of the sons of the other tribes of the children of Israel; then shall their inheritance be taken from the inheritance of our fathers, and shall be put to the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received: so shall it be taken from the lot of our inheritance. 4. And when the jubile of the children of Israel shall be, then shall their inheritance be put unto the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received: so shall their inheritance be taken away from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers.

We have here the humble address, which the heads of the tribe of Manasseh made to Moses and the princes, on occasion of the order lately made concerning the daughters of Zelophehad. The family they belonged to was part of that half of the tribe of Manasseh, which was yet to have their lot within Jordan, not that half that was already settled, and yet they speak of the land of their possession, and the inheritance of their fathers, with as great assurance, as if they had it already in their hands, knowing whom they had trusted. In their appeal observe,

1. They fairly recite the former order made in this case, and do not move to have that set aside, but are very willing to acquiesce in it, *ver. 2*. *The Lord commanded to give the inheritance of Zelophehad to his daughters*; and they are very well pleased it should be so, none of them knowing but that hereafter it might be the case of their own families, and then their daughters would have the benefit of this law.

2. They represent the inconvenience which might possibly follow hereupon, if the daughters of Zelophehad should see cause to marry into any other tribes, *ver. 3*. And it is likely this was not a bare surmise, or supposition, but that they knew at this time great court was made to them by some young gentlemen of other tribes, because they were heiresses, that they might get footing in this tribe, and so enlarge their own inheritance. This truly is often aimed at more than it should be in making marriages; not the meetness of the person, but the convenience of the estate, to *lay house to house, and field to field*. *Wisdom indeed* is

is good with an inheritance; but what is an inheritance good for in that relation without wisdom? But here we may presume the personal merit of these daughters, recommended them as well as their fortunes; however the heads of their tribe foresaw the mischief that would follow, and brought the case to Moses, that he might consult the oracle of God concerning it. The difficulty they start God could have obviated, and provided against in the former order given in this case, but to teach us, that we must in our affairs, not only attend God's providence, but make use of our own prudence, God did not direct in it, till they themselves that were concerned wisely foresaw the inconvenience, and piously addressed to Moses for a rule in it. For though they were chief fathers in their families, and might have assumed a power to over-rule these daughters of Zelophehad, in disposing themselves, especially their father being dead, and the common interest of their tribe being concerned in it, yet they chose rather to refer themselves to Moses, and it issued well. We should not covet to be judges in our own case, for it is hard to be so, and not be partial. It is easier in many cases to take good advice than to give it, and a satisfaction to be under direction.

Two things they aimed at in their representation:

1. To preserve the Divine appointment of inheritances. They urge the command, *ver. 2.* that the land should be given by lot to the respective tribes, and urge that it would break in upon the Divine appointment, if such a considerable part of the lot of Manasseh should by their marriage be transferred to any other tribe; for the issue would be denominated from the father's tribe, not the mother's. This indeed would not lessen the lot of the particular persons of that tribe, they would have their own still, but it would lessen the lot of the tribe in general, and render it less strong and considerable; they therefore thought themselves concerned for the reputation of their tribe; and perhaps were the more jealous for it, because it was already very much weakened by the sitting down of the one half of it on this side Jordan.

2. To prevent contests and quarrels among posterity. If those of other tribes should come among them, perhaps it might occasion some contests: they would be apt to give and receive disturbance, and their title might, in process of time, come to be questioned; and how great a matter would this fire kindle! It is the wisdom and duty of those that have estates in the world to settle them, and dispose of them, so as that no strife and contention may arise about them, among posterity.

5. And Moses commanded the children of Israel, according to the word of the LORD, saying, The tribe of the sons of Joseph hath said well. 6. This is the thing which the LORD doth command concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, Let them marry to whom they think best; only to the family of the tribe of their father shall they marry. 7. So shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe: for every one of the children of Israel shall keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. 8. And every daughter that possesseth an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel, shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the children of Israel may enjoy every man the inheritance of his fathers. 9. Neither shall the inheritance remove from one tribe to another tribe; but every one of the tribes of the children of Israel shall keep himself to his own inheritance. 10. Even as the LORD commanded Moses, so did the daughters of Zelophehad. 11. For Mahlah, Tirzah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, were married unto

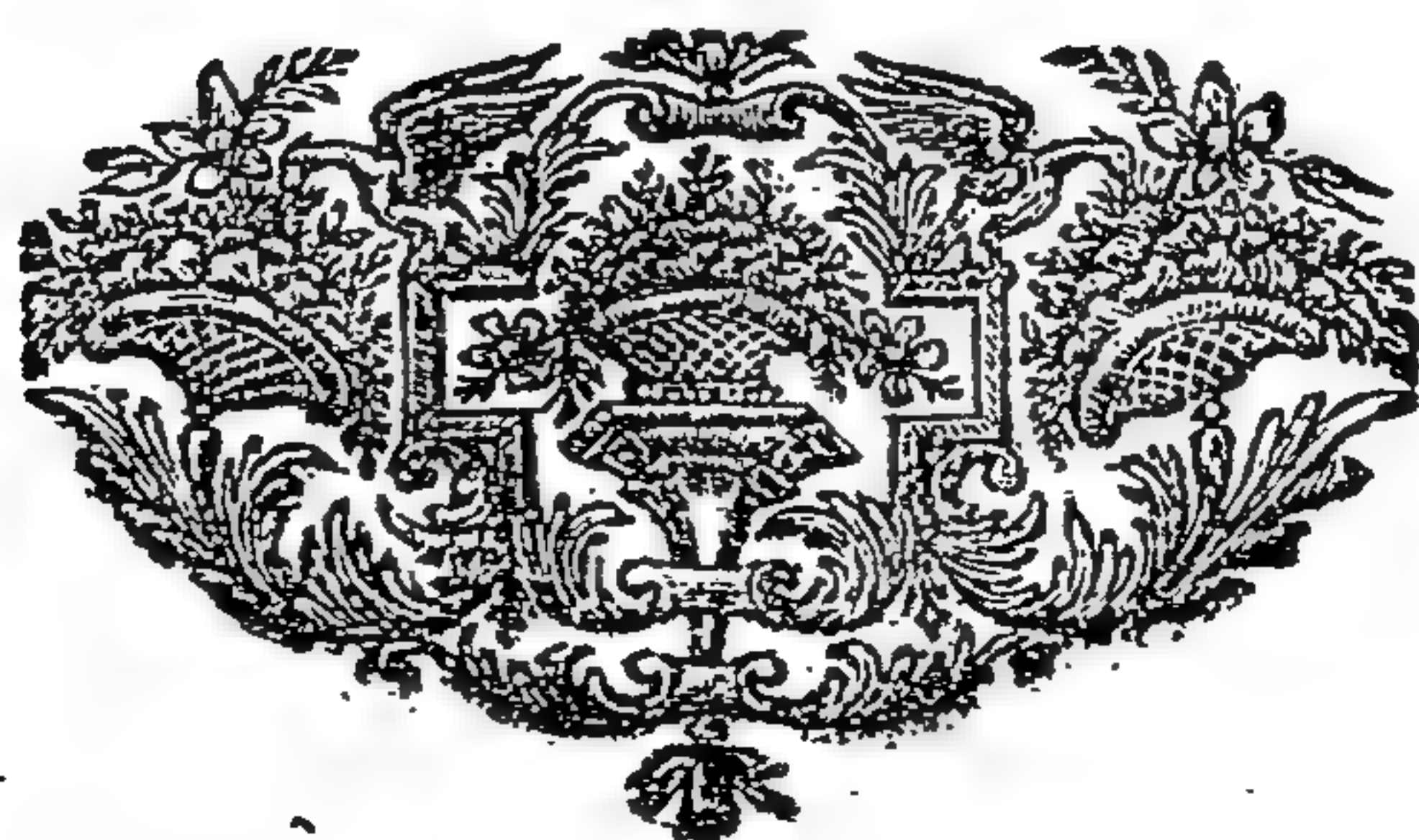
their fathers brothers sons. 12. And they were married into the families of the sons of Manasseh the son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained in the tribe of the family of their father. 13. These are the commandments and the judgments which the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses, unto the children of Israel in the plains of Moab, by Jordan near Jericho.

Here is 1. The matter settled by express order from God between the daughters of Zelophehad, and the rest of the tribe of Manasseh. The petition is assented to, and care taken to prevent the inconvenience feared; *ver. 5.* *The tribe of the sons of Joseph hath said well.* Thus those that consult the oracles of God, concerning the making of their heavenly inheritance sure, shall not only be directed what to do, but their enquiries shall be graciously accepted, and they shall have not only their *will done*, but their *well said*, good and faithful servant. Now the matter is thus accommodated; these heiresses must be obliged to marry, not only within their own tribe of Manasseh, but within the particular family of the Hephertites to which they did belong. (1.) They are not determined to any particular persons, there was choice enough in the family of their father, *Let them marry to whom they think best.* As children must preserve the authority of their parents, and not marry against their mind; so parents must consult the affections of their children in disposing of them, and not compel them to marry such as they cannot love. Forced marriages are not likely to prove well. (2.) Yet they are confined to their own relations, that their inheritance might not go to another family. God would have them know, that the land being to be divided by lot, the disposal whereof was of the Lord, they could not mend, and therefore should not alter his appointment. The inheritances must not *remove from tribe to tribe*, *ver. 7.* lest there should be confusion among them, their estates entangled, and their genealogies perplexed. God would not have one tribe to be enriched, by the straitning and impoverishing of another, since they were all alike the seed of Abraham his friend.

2. The law in this particular case made perpetual, and to be observed whenever hereafter the like case should happen, *ver. 8.* those that were not heiresses might marry into what tribe they pleased (tho' we may suppose that ordinarily they kept within their own tribe) but those that were, must either quit their claim to their inheritance, or marry one of their own family, that each of the tribes might keep themselves to their own inheritance, and one tribe might not encroach upon another, but throughout their generations there might remain immoveable the ancient landmarks set, not by their fathers, but by the *God of their fathers.*

3. The submission of the daughters of Zelophehad to this appointment. How could they but marry well, and to their satisfaction, when God himself directed them? they married their fathers brothers sons, *ver. 10, 11, 12.* By this it appears, (1.) That the marriage of cousin-germans is not in it self unlawful, nor within the degrees prohibited, for then God would not have countenanced these marriages. But, (2.) That ordinarily it is not advisable, for if there had not been a particular reason for it, (which cannot hold in any case now, inheritances being not disposed of as then by the special designation of heaven) they would not have married such near relations. The world is wide, and he that walks uprightly will endeavour to walk surely.

Lastly, The conclusion of this whole book, referring to the latter part of it, *these are the judgments which the Lord commanded in the plains of Moab*, *ver. 13.* these foregoing ever since *chap. xxvi.* most of which related to their settlement in Canaan, into which they were now entering. Whatever new condition God is by his providence bringing us into, we must beg of him to teach us the duty of it, and to enable us to do it; that we may do the work of the day in its day, of the place in its place.



A N
E X P O S I T I O N,
W I T H
P R A C T I C A L O B S E R V A T I O N S,
Upon the Fifth Book of Moses, called
D E U T E R O N O M Y.

This book is a repetition of very much both of the history, and of the laws contained in the three foregoing books; which repetition Moses delivered to Israel both by word of mouth, that it might affect, and by writing, that it might abide; a little before his death. There is no new history in it but that of the death of Moses in the last chapter, nor any new revelation to Moses for ought appears; and therefore the stile here is not as before, The Lord spake unto Moses, saying. But the former laws are repeated and commented upon, explained; and enlarged, and some particular precepts added to them, with copious reasonings for the enforcing of them; in this Moses was divinely inspired, and assisted, so that this is as truly the word of the Lord by Moses, as that which was spoken to him with an audible voice out of the tabernacle of the congregation, Lev. i. 1. The Greek interpreters call it Deuteronomy, which signifies, the second law; or, a second edition of the law, not with amendments; for there needed none, but with additions, for the further direction of the people in divers cases not mentioned before. — Now (1.) It was much for the honour of the Divine law, that it should be thus repeated; how great were the things of that law, which was thus inculcated, and how inexcusable would they be by whom they were counted as a strange thing! Hof. viii. 12. (2.) There might be a particular reason for the repeating of it now; the men of that generation to whom the law was first given were all dead, and a new generation was sprung up, to whom God would have it repeated by Moses himself, that, if possible, it might make a lasting impression upon them. Now they were just going to take possession of the land of Canaan, Moses must read the articles of agreement to them; that they might know upon what terms and conditions they were to hold and enjoy that land, and might understand that they were upon their good behaviour in it. (3.) It would be of great use to the people to have those parts of the law thus gathered up, and put together, which did more immediately concern them, and their practice; for the laws which concerned the priests and Levites and the execution of their offices are not repeated; it was enough for them that they were once delivered; but in compassion to the infirmities of the people, the laws of more common concern are delivered a second time. Precept must be upon precept, and line upon line, Isa. xxviii. 10. The great and needful truths of the gospel should be often pressed upon people by the ministers of Christ. To write the same things (saith Paul, Phil. iii. 1.) to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. What God has spoken once we have need to hear twice, to hear many times, and it is well if, after all, it be duly perceived and regarded. — Three ways this book of Deuteronomy was magnified and made honourable. (1.) The king was to write a copy of it with his own hand, and to read therein all the days of his life, chap. xvii. 18. (2.) It was to be written upon great stones plaistered at their passing over Jordan, chap. xxvii. 2, 3. (3.) It was to be read publicly every seventh year, at the feast of tabernacles, by the priest, in the audience of all Israel, chap. xxxi. 9. — The Gospel is a kind of Deuteronomy, a second law, a remedial law, a spiritual law, a law of faith; by it we are under the law to Christ, and it is a law that makes the comers thereunto perfect. — This book of Deuteronomy begins with a brief rehearsal of the most remarkable events that had befallen them since they came from mount Sinai; at the fourth chapter comes a most pathetic exhortation to obedience; at the twelfth chapter, and so on to the twenty-seventh are repeated many particular laws, which are enforced, chap. xxvii, and xxviii. with promises and threatenings, blessings and curses, formed into a covenant, chap. xxix, and xxx. care taken to perpetuate the remembrance of these things among them, chap. xxxi. particularly by a song, chap. xxxii. and so Moses concludes with a blessing, chap. xxxiii. — All this was delivered by Moses to Israel in the last month of his life. The whole book contains the history but of two months; compare Judg. i. 3. with Josh. iv. 19. the latter of which was the thirty days of Israel's mourning for Moses; see how busy that great and good man was to do good, when he knew that his time was short; how quick his motion when he drew near his rest. Thus we have more recorded of what our blessed Saviour said and did in the last week of his life, than in any other. The last words of eminent persons do or should make deep impressions. — Observe, for the honour of this book, that when our Saviour would answer the Devil's temptations with It is written, he fetched all his quotations out of this book, Matth. iv. 4—viii. 10.

C H A P. I.

The first part of Moses's farewell sermon to Israel begins with this chapter, and is continued to the latter end of the fourth chapter. In the five first verses of this chapter we have the date of the sermon; the place where it was preached, ver. 1, 2, 5. and the time when, ver. 3, 4. The narrative in this chapter reminds them, 1. Of the promise God made them of the land of Canaan, ver. 6, 8. 2. Of the provision made of judges for them. ver. 9, 18. 3. Of their unbelief and murmuring upon the report of the spies. ver. 19, 33. 4. Of the sentence passed upon them for it, and the ratification of that sentence, ver. 34—46.

1. **T**HESE be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel, on this side Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain over-against the Red sea, between Paran and Tophel, and Laban, and Azeroth, and Dizahab. 2. (There are eleven days journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir, unto Kadesh-barnea) 3. And it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spake unto the children of Israel, according unto all that the LORD had given him in commandment unto them; 4. After he had slain Sihon the king of the Amorites, which dwelt in Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, which dwelt at Astaroth in Edrei. 5. On this side Jordan, in the land of Moab, began Moses to declare this law, saying, 6. The LORD our God spake unto us in Horeb, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount: 7. Turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all the places nigh thereunto, in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale, and in the south, and by the sea-side, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, unto the great river the river Euphrates. 8. Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them, and to their seed after them.

We have here, 1. The date of this sermon which Moses preached to the people of Israel. A great auditory, no question, he had, as many as could crowd within hearing, and particularly all the elders and officers, the representatives of the people; and probably, it was on the sabbath-day that he delivered this to them. (1.) The place where they were now encamped was *in the plain, in the land of Moab*, (ver. 1, 5.) where they were just ready to enter Canaan, and engage in a war with the Canaanites, yet he discoursed not to them concerning military affairs, the arts and stratagems of war, but concerning their duty to God; for if they kept themselves in his fear and favour, he would secure to them the conquest of the land; their religion would be their best policy. (2.) The time was, near the end of the fortieth year, since they came out of Egypt. So long God had *born their manners*, and they had *born their own iniquity*, (Num. xiv. 34.) and now a new and more pleasant scene was to be introduced, as a token for good. Moses repeats the law to them. Thus after God's controversy with them for the golden calf, the first and surest sign of God's being reconciled to them, was the *renewing of the tables*. There is no better evidence and earnest of God's favour than his putting his law in our hearts, *Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20.*

2. The discourse itself. In general, Moses spake unto them *all that the Lord had given him in commandment*, ver. 3. Which intimates not only, that what he now delivered was for substance the same with what had formerly been commanded, but it was what God now commanded him to repeat. He gave them this rehearsal and exhortation purely by Divine direction; God appointed him to leave this legacy to the church.

He begins his narrative with their removal from mount Sinai, ver. 6, and relates here (1.) The orders God gave them to decamp, and proceed in their march, ver. 6, 7. *Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount*, that was the mount that *burned with fire*, Heb. xii. 18. and *gendered to bondage*, Gal. iv. 24. Thither God brought them to humble them, and by the terrors of the law, to prepare them for the land of promise. There he kept them about a year, and then told them they had *dwelt long enough* there, they must go forward. Though God bring his people into trouble and affliction, into spiritual trouble and affliction of mind, he knows when they have *dwelt long enough* in it, and will certainly find a time, the fittest time, to advance them from the terrors of the *spirit of bondage* to the comforts of the *spirit of adoption*. See *Rom. viii. 15.* (2.) The prospect he gave them of a happy settlement in Canaan presently, *Go to the land of the Canaanites*, ver. 7. enter and take possession, it is all your own, *Behold I have set the land before you*, ver. 8. But when God commands us to go forward in our christian course, he sets the heavenly Canaan before us for our encouragement.

9. ¶ And I spake unto you at that time, saying, I am not able to bear you myself alone: 10. The LORD your God hath multiplied you, and behold, you are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude. 11. (The LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are, and bless you as he hath promised you) 12. How can I myself alone bare your cumbrance, and your burden, and your strife? 13. Take ye wise men and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you. 14. And ye answered me and said, The thing which thou hast spoken, is good for us to do. 15. So I took the chief of your tribes, wise men, and known, and made them heads over you, captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens, and officers among your tribes, 16. And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him. 17. Ye shall not respect persons in judgment, but you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid of the face of man, for the judgment is Gods: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it. 18. And I commanded you at that time all the things which ye should do.

Moses here minds them of the happy constitution of their government, which was such as might make them all safe and easy, if it were not their own fault. When good laws were given them, good men were intrusted with the execution of them; which as it was an instance of God's goodness to them, so it was of the care of Moses concerning them; and it should seem he mentions it here, to recommend himself to them as a man that sincerely sought their welfare, and so to make way for what he was about to say to them, wherein he aimed at nothing but their good.

In this part of his narrative he insinuates to them, 1. That he greatly rejoiced in the increase of their numbers. He owns the accomplishment of God's promise to Abraham, ver. 10. *You are as the stars of heaven for multitude*, and prays for the further accomplishment of it, ver. 11. *God make you a thousand times more*. This prayer comes in in a parenthesis, and a good prayer prudently put in cannot be impertinent, in any discourse of divine things; nor will a pious ejaculation break the coherence, but rather strengthen and adorn it. But how greatly are his desires enlarged, when he prays that they might be made a thousand times more than they were? We are not straitened in the power and goodness of God, why should we be straitened in our own faith and hope, which ought to be as large as the promise? and larger it need not be. It is from the promise that Moses here takes the measure of his prayer, *The Lord bless you as he hath promised you*. And why might he not hope that they might become a thousand times more than they were now, when they were now ten thousand times more than they were when they came down into Egypt, about 250 years ago? Observe, When they were under the government of Pharaoh the increase of their numbers was envied, and complained of as a grievance, *Exod. i. 9.* but now under the government of Moses it was rejoiced in, and prayed for as a blessing, the comparing of which might give them occasion to reflect with shame upon their own folly, when they had talked of making a captain and returning to Egypt.

2. That he was not ambitious of monopolizing the honour of the government, and ruling them himself alone, as an absolute monarch, ver. 9. Though he was a man as well worthy of that honour, and as well qualified for the business, as ever any man was, yet he was desirous that others might be taken in as assistants to him in the business, and consequently sharers with him in the honour. *I cannot myself alone bear the burthen*, ver. 12. Magistracy is a burthen. Moses himself, though so eminently gifted for it, found it lay heavy on his shoulders; nay, the best magistrates complain most of the burthen, and are most desirous of help, and most afraid of undertaking more than they can perform.

3. That he was not desirous to prefer his own creatures, or such as should underhand have a dependence upon him, for he leaves it to the people to chuse their judges, to whom he would grant commissions, not *durante beneplacito*, to be turned out when he pleased; but *quam diu se bene gesserint*, to continue as long as they approved themselves faithful, ver. 13. *Take ye wise men, that are known to be so among your tribes, and I will make them rulers*. Thus the apostles directed the multitude to chuse overseers of the poor, and then they ordained them, *Acts vi. 3.* He directs them to take wise men and understanding, whose personal merit would recommend them; the rise and original of this nation was so late that none of them could pretend to antiquity of race, and nobility of birth above their brethren; and they having all newly come out of slavery in Egypt, it is probable one family was not much richer

4. He repeats the report which the spies brought of the goodness of the land, they were sent to survey, *ver.* 24, 25. The blessings God has promised are truly valuable and desirable, even the unbelievers themselves being judges: never any looked into the Holy Land, but they must own it a good land. Yet they represented the difficulties of conquering it as insuperable; *ver.* 28. as if it were in vain to think of attacking them either by battle, for the people are taller than we, or by siege, for the cities are walled up to heaven: an hyperbole they made use of to serve their ill purpose, which was to dishearten the people, and perhaps therein

therein they intended to reflect on the God of heaven himself, as if they were able to defy him, like the Babel builders, the top of whose tower must reach to heaven, *Gen. xi. 4.* Those places only are walled up to heaven, that are compassed with God's favour, as with a shield.

5. He tells them what pains he took with them to encourage them, when their brethren said so much to discourage them, *ver. 29.* *Then I said unto you, Dread not.* Moses suggested enough to have stilled the tumult, and to have kept them with their faces toward Canaan. He assured them that God was present with them, and president among them, and would certainly fight for them, *ver. 30.* And for proof of his power over their enemies, he refers them to what they had seen done in Egypt, where their enemies had all possible advantages against them, and yet were humbled, and forced to yield, *ver. 30.* And for proof of God's good-will to them, and the real kindness he intended them, he refers them to what they had seen in the wilderness, *ver. 31, 33.* through which they had been guided by the eye of divine wisdom, in a pillar of cloud and fire which directed both their motions, and their rests; and had been carried in the arms of divine grace, with as much care and tenderness as ever any child was born in the arms of a nursing father. And was there any room left to distrust this God? Or were they not the most ungrateful people in the world, who, after such sensible proofs of the divine goodness *hardened their hearts in the day of temptation?* Moses had complained once, that God had charged him to carry this people as the nursing father doth the sucking child, *Numb. xi. 12.* But here he owns it was God that so carried them, and perhaps this is alluded to *Acts. xiii. 18.* where he is said to bear them, or to suffer their manners.

6. He chargeth them with the sin they were guilty of upon this occasion. Though those he was now speaking to were a new generation, yet he lays it upon them, *ye rebelled, and ye murmured;* for many of these were then in being, though under twenty years old, and perhaps were engaged in the riot; and the rest inherited their fathers vices, and smarted for them. Observe what he lays to their charge. (1.) Disobedience, and rebellion against God's law. *Ye would not go up, but rebelled,* *ver. 26.* The rejecting of God's favours is really a rebelling against his authority. (2.) Invidious reflections upon God's goodness. They basely suggested, *ver. 27.* *Because the Lord hated us, he brought us out of Egypt.* What could have been said more absurd and disingenuous, and more reproachful to God? (3.) An unbelieving heart at the bottom of all this, *ver. 32.* *Ye did not believe the Lord your God.* All our disobedience to God's laws, and distrust of his power and goodness flows from a disbelief of his word. A sad pass it is come to with us, when the God of eternal truth cannot be believed!

7. He repeats the sentence passed upon them for this sin, which now they had seen the execution of. (1.) They were all condemned to die in the wilderness, and none of them must be suffered to enter Canaan, except Caleb and Joshua, *ver. 34, 35, 36.* So long they must continue their wanderings in the wilderness that most of them would drop off of course, and the youngest of them should be cut off. Thus they could not enter in because of unbelief. It was not the breach of any of the commands of the law that shut them out of Canaan, no, not the golden calf, but their disbelief of that promise which was typical of gospel grace, to signify, that no sin will ruin us but unbelief, which is a sin against the remedy. (2.) Moses himself afterwards fell under God's displeasure, for a hasty word they provoked him to speak, *ver. 37.* *The Lord was angry with me for your sakes.* Because all the old stock must go off, Moses himself must not stay behind. Their unbelief let death into the camp, and when he is entered even Moses falls within his commission. (3.) Yet here is mercy mixed with this wrath. (1.) That though Moses might not bring them into Canaan, Joshua should, *ver. 38.* *Encourage him,* for he would be discouraged from taking up a government, which he saw Moses himself fall under the weight of; but let him be assured he shall accomplish that for which he is raised up, *he shall cause Israel to inherit it.* Thus what the law could not do in that it was weak, Jesus, our Joshua, doth by bringing in the better hope. (2.) That though this generation should not enter Canaan, the next should, *ver. 39.* As they had been chosen for their fathers sakes, so their children might justly have been rejected for their sakes. But mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

8. He minds them of their foolish and fruitless attempt to get this sentence reversed, when it was too late. (1.) They tried it by their reformation, in this particular: whereas they had refused to go up against the Canaanites, now they would go up, ay, that they would, in all haste, and they girded on their weapons of war for that purpose, *ver. 41.* thus when the door is shut, and the day of grace is over, there will be found those that stand without and knock. But this which looked like a reformation, proved but a further rebellion, God, by Moses, prohibited the attempt, *ver. 42.* *Yet they went presumptuously up to the hill,* *ver. 43.* acting now in contempt of the threatening, as before in contempt of the promise, as if they were governed by a spirit of contradiction, and it sped accordingly, *ver. 44.* they were chased and destroyed, and by this defeat which they suffered, when they had provoked God to leave them, they were taught what success they might

have had if they had kept themselves in his love. (2.) They tried by their prayers and tears to get the sentence reversed, *ver. 45.* *They returned, and wept before the Lord.* While they were fretting and quarrelling it is said, *Numb. xiv. 1.* *They wept that night;* those were tears of rebellion against God, these were tears of repentance and humiliation before God. Note, Tears of discontent must be wept over again: the sorrow of the world worketh death, and is to be repented of; it is not so with godly sorrow, that will end in joy. But their weeping was all to no purpose, *The Lord would not hearken to your voice,* because you would not hearken to his; the decree was gone forth, and, like Esau, they found no place of repentance, tho' they sought it carefully with tears.

C H A P. II.

Moses in this chapter proceeds in the rehearsal of God's providences concerning Israel in their way to Canaan, yet preserves not the record of any thing that happened during their tedious march back to the Red-sea, in which they wore out almost 38 years, but passeth that over in silence, as a dark time; and makes his narrative to begin again when they faced about towards Canaan, *ver. 1—3.* and drew towards the countries that were inhabited, concerning which God here gives them direction. 1. What nations they must not give any disturbance to. (1.) Not to the Edomites, *ver. 4—8.* (2.) Not to the Moabites, *ver. 9.* of the antiquities of whose country, with that of the Edomites, he gives some account, *ver. 10—12.* And here comes in an account of their passing the river Zered, *ver. 13—16.* (3.) Not to the Ammonites, of whose country here is some account given, *ver. 17—23.* 2. What nations they should attack and conquer. They must begin with Sihon, king of the Amorites, *ver. 24, 26.* And accordingly, (1.) They had a fair occasion of quarrelling with him, *ver. 26—32.* 2. God gave them a compleat victory over him, *ver. 33—37.*

1. **T**HEN we turned, and took our journey into the wilderness, by the way of the Red sea, as the LORD spake unto me; and we compassed mount Seir many days. 2. And the LORD spake unto me, saying, 3. Ye have compassed this mountain long enough: turn you northward. 4. And command thou the people, saying, Ye are to pass through the course of your brethren the children of Esau, which dwell in Seir, and they shall be afraid of you: take ye good heed unto yourselves therefore. 5. Meddle not with them; for I will not give you of their land, no not so much as a foot breadth, because I have given mount Seir unto Esau for a possession. 6. Ye shall buy meat of them for money, that ye may eat; and ye shall also buy water of them for money, that ye may drink. 7. For the LORD thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the LORD thy God hath been with thee, thou hast lacked nothing.

Here is, 1. A short account of the long story of Israel in the wilderness; *We compassed mount Seir many days,* *ver. 1.* Near 38 years they wandered in the deserts of Seir, probably in some of their rests they stayed several years, and never stirred; God by this not only chastised them for their murmuring and unbelief, but (1.) Prepared them for Canaan, by humbling them for sin, teaching them to mortify their lusts, to follow God, and to comfort themselves in him. It is a work of time to make souls meet for heaven, and it must be done by a long train of exercises. (2.) He prepared the Canaanites for destruction, all this time the measure of their iniquity was in the filling, and tho' it might have been improved by them as a space to repent, it was abused by them to the hardening of their hearts. Now the host of Israel was once repulsed, and after that was so long entangled, and seemingly lost in the wilderness they were secure, and thought the danger was over from that quarter, which would make the next attempt of Israel upon them the more dreadful.

2. Orders given them to turn towards Canaan: Tho' God contended long, he will not contend for ever. Tho' Israel may be long kept waiting for deliverance and enlargement, it will come at last. *The vision is for an appointed time, and at the end it shall speak, and not lie.*

3. A charge given them not to annoy the Edomites: 1. They must not offer any hostility to them as enemies, *ver. 4, 5.* *Meddle not with them.* (1.) They must not improve the advantage they had against them, by the fright they would be put into upon Israel's approach. *They shall be afraid of you,* knowing your strength and numbers, and the power of God engaged for you, but do not you think that their fears making them an easy prey, you may therefore prey upon them; no, take heed to your selves. There is need of great caution, and a strict government of our own spirits, to keep our selves from injuring those we have an advantage against. Or, this caution is given to the princes; they must not only not meddle with the Edomites themselves, but not

permit any of their foldiers to meddle with them. (2.) They must not revenge upon the Edomites the affront they gave them in refusing them passage through their country, *Numb. xx. 21.* Thus before God brought Israel to destroy their enemies in Canaan, he taught them to forgive their enemies in Edom. (3.) They must not expect to have any part of their land given them for a possession; mount Seir was already settled upon the Edomites, and they must not, under pretence of God's covenant and conduct, think to seize for themselves all they could lay hands on. Dominion is not founded in grace. God's Israel shall be well-placed, but must not expect to be placed alone in the midst of the earth, *Isa. v. 8.*

4. They must trade with them as neighbours: buy meat and water of them, and pay for what they bought, *ver. 6.* religion must never be made a cloke for injustice. The reason given, *ver. 7.* is, because God hath blessed thee, and hitherto thou hast lacked nothing; and therefore, (1.) Thou needest not beg; scorn to be beholden to Edomites, when thou hast a God all-sufficient to depend upon. Thou hast wherewithal to pay for what thou callest for, thanks to the Divine blessing, use therefore what thou hast, use it cheerfully, and do not sponge upon the Edomites. (2.) Therefore thou must not steal. Thou hast experienced the care of the Divine providence concerning thee, in confidence of which for the future, and in a firm belief of its all-sufficiency, never use any indirect methods for thy supply. Live by thy faith, and not by thy sword.

8. And when we passed by from our brethren the children of Esau, which dwelt in Seir, through the way of the plain from Elath, and from Ezion-gaber, we turned and passed by the way of the wilderness of Moab. 9. And the LORD said unto me, Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle: for I will not give thee of their land for a possession, because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot for a possession. 10. The Emims dwelt therein in times past, a people great and many, and tall as the Anakims: 11. Which also were accounted giants, as the Anakims, but the Moabites call them Emims. 12. The Horims also dwelt in Seir before-time, but the children of Esau succeeded them when they had destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead, as Israel did unto the land of his possession, which the LORD gave unto them: 13. Now rise up, said I, and get you over the brook Zered; and we went over the brook Zered. 14. And the space in which we came from Kadesh-barnea, until we were come over the brook Zered, was thirty and eight years; until all the generations of the men of war were wasted out from among the host, as the LORD sware unto them. 15. For indeed the hand of the LORD was against them to destroy them from among the host, until they were consumed. 16. ¶ So it came to pass, when all the men of war were consumed and dead from among the people; 17. That the LORD spake unto me, saying, 18. Thou art to pass over through Ar, the coast of Moab, this day: 19. And when thou comest nigh over against the children of Ammon, distress them not, nor meddle with them: for I will not give thee of the land of the children of Ammon any possession, because I have given it unto the children of Lot for a possession. 20. (That also was accounted a land of giants, giants dwelt therein in old time, and the Ammonites called them Zamzummims, 21. A people great and many, and tall as the Anakims; but the LORD destroyed them before them, and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead: 22. As he did to the children of Esau which dwelt in Seir, when he destroyed the Horims from before them, and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead even unto this day: 23. And the Avims which dwelt in Hazarim, even unto Azzah, the Caphtorims which came forth out of Caphtor, destroyed them and dwelt in their stead.)

It is observable here that Moses speaking of the Edomites, *ver. 8.* calls them *our brethren, the children of Esau*; tho' they had been unkind to Israel, in refusing them a peaceable passage through their country, yet he calls them brethren: For tho' our relations fail in their duty to us, we must retain a sense of the relation, and not be wanting in our duty to them, as there is occasion.

Now in these verses we have,

1. The account which Moses gives of the original of the nations which he had here occasion to speak of; the Moabites, Edomites, and Ammonites. We know very well from other parts of his history, whose posterity they were, but here he tells us how they came to these countries in which Israel found them; they were not the *aborigines*, or first planters. But (1.) the Moabites dwelt in a country which had belonged to a numerous race of

giants, called Emims, *i. e.* terrible ones; as tall as the Anakims, and perhaps more fierce, *ver. 10, 11.* (2.) The Edomites in like manner dispossessed the Horims from mount Seir, and took their country, *ver. 12.* and again, *ver. 22.* of which we read, *Gen. xxxvi. 20.* (3.) The Ammonites likewise got possession of a country that had formerly been inhabited by giants, called Zamzummims, crafty men, or wicked men; *ver. 20, 21.* probably, the same that are called Zuzims, *Gen. xiv. 5.* He illustrates these remarks by an instance older than any of these, the Caphtorims (who are a-kin to the Philistines, *Gen. x. 14.*) drove the Avims out of their country and took possession of it, *ver. 23.* the learned bishop Patrick supposes these Avites being expelled here; to have settled in Assyria, and to be the same people we read of under that name, *2 Kin. xvii. 31.* Now these revolutions are recorded, (1.) To shew how soon the world was peopled after the flood, so well peopled that when a family grew numerous, they could not find a place to settle in, at least in that part of the world, but they must drive out those that were already settled. (2.) To shew that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. Giants were expelled by those of ordinary stature; for probably, these giants, like those before the flood, (*Gen. vi. 4.*) were notorious for impiety and oppression, which brought the judgments of God upon them, against which their great strength would be no defence. (3.) To shew what uncertain things worldly possessions are, and how oft they change their owners: it was so of old; and ever will be so. Families decline, and from them estates are transferred to families that increase; so little constancy or continuance is there in these things. (4.) To encourage the children of Israel, who were now going to take possession of Canaan against the difficulties they would meet with, and to shew the unbelief of those that were afraid of the sons of Anak, to whom the giants here said to be conquered are compared, *ver. 11, 21.* if the providence of God had done this for Moabites and Ammonites, much more would his promise do it for Israel, his peculiar people.

2. The advances which Israel made towards Canaan. They passed by the way of the wilderness of Moab, *ver. 8.* and then went over the brook or vale of Zered, *ver. 13.* and there Moses takes notice of the fulfilling of the word God had spoken concerning them. That none of those that were numbered at mount Sinai should see the land that God had promised, *Numb. xiv. 23.* according to that sentence, now they began to set their faces towards Canaan, and to have it in their eye; notice is taken of their being all destroyed and consumed, and not a man of them left, *ver. 14.* Common providence, we may observe, in about 38 years, ordinarily raiseth a new generation, so that in that time few remain of the old ones, but here it was intirely new, and none at all remained, but Caleb and Joshua; for indeed the hand of the Lord was against them, *ver. 15.* Those cannot but waste, until they are consumed, who have the hand of God against them. Observe, Israel is not called to engage with the Canaanites till all the men of war, the veteran regiments, that had been used to hardship, and had learned the art of war from the Egyptians, were consumed and dead from among the people; *ver. 16.* that the conquest of Canaan, being effected by an host of new raised men, trained up in a wilderness, the excellency of the power might the more plainly appear to be of God, and not of men.

3. The caution given them, not to meddle with the Moabites or Ammonites, whom they must not dispossess, nor so much as disturb in their possessions. Distress them not, nor contend with them, *ver. 9.* tho' the Moabites aimed to ruin Israel, *Numb. xxii. 6.* yet Israel must not aim to ruin them. If others design us a mischief, that will not justify us in designing them a mischief. But why must not the Moabites and Ammonites be meddled with? (1.) Because they were the children of Lot, *ver. 9, 19.* righteous Lot, who kept his integrity in Sodom. Note, Children often fare the better in this world for the piety of their ancestors; the seed of the upright, tho' they degenerate, yet are blessed with temporal good things. (2.) Because the land they were possessed of, was what God had given them, and he did not design it for Israel. Even wicked men have a right to their worldly possessions, and must not be wronged.—The tares are allowed their place in the field, and must not be rooted out until the harvest. God gives and preserves outward blessings to wicked men; to shew that these are not the best things, but he has better in store for his own children.

24. ¶ Rise ye up, take your journey; and pass over the river Arnon: behold, I have given into thine hand Sihon the Amorite king of Heshbon, and his land, begin to possess it, and contend with him in battle. 25. This day will I begin to put the dread of thee, and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heaven, who shall hear report of thee, and shall tremble, and be in anguish because of thee. 26. ¶ And I sent messengers out of the wilderness of Kedemoth, unto Sihon king of Heshbon, with words of peace, saying, 27. Let me pass through thy land: I will go along by the highway, I will neither turn unto the right hand nor to the left. 28. Thou shalt sell me meat for money, that I may eat; and give me water for money, that I may drink: only

only I will pass through on my feet : 29. (As the children of Esau which dwell in Seir, and the Moabites which dwell in Ar, did unto me) until I shall pass over Jordan, into the land which the LORD our God giveth us. 30. But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him : for the LORD thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand, as *appeareth* this day : 31. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have begun to give Sihon and his land before thee : begin to possess, that thou mayest inherit his land. 32. Then Sihon came out against us, he and all his people, to fight at Jahaz. 33. And the LORD our God delivered him before us, and we smote him, and his sons, and all his people. 34. And we took all his cities at that time, and utterly destroyed the men and women, and the little ones of every city, we left none to remain : 35. Only the cattle we took for a prey unto our selves, and the spoil of the cities which we took. 36. From Aroer, which is by the brink of the river of Arnon, and from the city that is by the river, even unto Gilead, there was not one city too strong for us : the LORD our God delivered all unto us. 37. Only unto the land of the children of Ammon thou camest not, nor unto any place of the river Jabbok, nor unto the cities in the mountains, nor unto whatsoever the LORD our God forbade us.

God having tried the self-denial of his people, in forbidding them to meddle with the Moabites and Ammonites, and they having quietly passed by those rich countries, and tho' superior in number not made any attack upon them, here he recompenseth them for their obedience by giving them possession of the country of Sihon king of the Amorites. If we forbear what God forbids, we shall receive what he promiseth, and shall be no losers at last by our obedience; tho' it may seem for the present to be to our loss. Wrong not others, and God shall right thee.

1. God gives them commission to seize upon the country of Sihon king of Heshbon, *ver. 24, 25.* This was then God's way of disposing kingdoms, but such particular grants are not now either to be expected or pretended. In this commission observe, (1.) Tho' God assured them the land should be their own, yet they must bestir themselves, and contend in battle with the enemy. What God gives, we must endeavour to get. (2.) God promiseth that when they fight, he will fight for them. Do you begin to possess it, and I will begin to put the dread of you upon them. God would dispirit the enemy, and so destroy them; would magnify Israel, and so terrify all those against whom they were commissioned. See *Exod. xv. 14.*

2. Moses sends to Sihon a message of peace, only begs a passage through his land, with a promise to give his country no disturbance, but the advantage of trading for ready money with so great a body, *ver. 26, 27, 28, 29.* Moses herein did neither disobey God, who bid him contend with Sihon, nor dissemble with Sihon; but doubtless it was by Divine direction that he did it, that Sihon might be left inexcusable, tho' God hardened his heart. This may illustrate the method of God's dealing with those to whom he gives his gospel, but doth not give grace to believe it.

3. Sihon began the war, *ver. 32.* God having made his heart obstinate, and hid from his eyes the things that belonged to his peace, *ver. 30.* That he might deliver him into the hand of Israel. Those that meddle with the people of God, meddle to their own hurt; and God sometimes ruins his enemies by their own resolves. See *Mic. iv. 11, 12, 13. Rev. xvi. 14.*

4. Israel was victorious. (1.) They put all the Amorites to the sword, men, women, and children, *ver. 33, 34.* this they did as the executioners of God's wrath, now the measure of the Amorites iniquity was full, *Gen. xv. 16.* and the longer it was in the filling, the sooner was the reckoning at last. This was one of the devoted nations, they died not as Israel's enemies, but as sacrifices to Divine justice, in the offering of which sacrifices Israel was employed as a kingdom of priests. The case being therefore extraordinary, it ought not to be drawn into a precedent for military executions which make no distinction, and give no quarter: they will have judgment without mercy, that shew no mercy. (2.) They took possession of all they had; their cities, *ver. 34.* their goods, *ver. 35.* and their land, *ver. 36.* the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just. What a new world did Israel now come into! Most of them were born, and had lived all their days in a vast howling wilderness, where they knew not what either fields or cities were, had no houses to dwell in, neither sowed nor reaped, and now of a sudden to become masters of a country so well built, so well husbanded, this made them amends for their long waiting, and yet it was but the earnest of a great deal more. Much more joyful will the change be which holy souls will experience, when they remove out of the wilderness of this world to the better country, that is the heavenly; to the city that has foundations.

CHAP. III.

Moses in this chapter relates, 1. The conquest of Og, king of Bashan, and the seizing of his country, *ver. 1—11.* 2. The distribution of these new conquests to the two tribes and a half, *ver. 12—17.* Under certain provisos and limitations, *ver. 18—20.* 3. The encouragement given to Joshua to carry on the war which was so gloriously begun, *ver. 21, 22.* 4. Moses's request to go over into Canaan, *ver. 23—25.* With the denial of that request, but the grant of an equivalent, *ver. 26—29.*

1. **T**HEN we turned, and went up the way to Bashan : and Og the king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei. 2. And the LORD said unto me, Fear him not : for I will deliver him, and all his people, and his land into thy hand, and thou shalt do unto him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon. 3. So the LORD our God delivered into our hands Og also the king of Bashan, and all his people : and we smote him until none was left to him remaining. 4. And we took all his cities at that time, there was not a city which we took not from them, threescore cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. 5. All these cities were fenced with high walls, gates and bars, beside unwalled towns a great many. 6. And we utterly destroyed them, as we did unto Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children of every city. 7. But all the cattle, and the spoil of the cities, we took for a prey to our selves. 8. And we took at that time out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites, the land that was on this side Jordan, from the river of Arnon unto mount Hermon : 9. (Which Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion : and the Amorites call it Shenir) 10. All the cities of the plain, and all Gilead, and all Bashan, unto Salchah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan : 11. For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants ; behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron : is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon ? nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man.

We have here another brave country delivered into the hand of Israel; that of Bashan; the conquest of Sihon and Og are often mentioned together to the praise of God, the rather because in these Israel's triumphs began, *Psal. cxxxv. 11—cxxxvi. 19.*

See 1. How they got the mastery of Og a very formidable prince, (1.) Very strong, for he was of the remnant of the giants, *ver. 11.* his personal strength was extraordinary; a monument of which was preserved by the Ammonites in his bedstead, which was shewed as a rarity in their chief city. You might guess at his weight by the materials of his bedstead, it was iron, as if a bedstead of wood were too weak for him to trust to; and you might guess at his stature by the dimensions of it, it was nine cubits long, and four cubits broad; which supposing a cubit to be but half a yard, (and some learned men have made it appear to be somewhat more) was four yards and a half long, and two yards broad, and if we allow his bedstead to be two cubits longer than himself, and that is as much as we need allow, he was three yards and a half high, double to the stature of an ordinary man, and every way proportionable, yet they smote him, *ver. 3.* Note, when God pleads his people's cause, he can deal with giants as with grasshoppers. No man's might can secure him against the Almighty. His army likewise was very powerful, for he had the command of sixty fortified cities, besides unwalled towns, *ver. 5.* Yet all this was nothing before God's Israel when they came with commission to destroy him. (2.) He was very stout, and daring; he came out against Israel to battle, *ver. 1.* It was wonder he did not take warning by the ruin of Sihon, and send to desire conditions of peace, but he trusted to his own strength, and so was hardened to his own destruction. Note, those that are not awakened by the judgments of God upon others, but persist in their defiance of heaven, are ripening apace for the like judgments upon themselves, *Jer. iii. 8.* God bade Moses not fear him, *ver. 2.* If Moses himself was so strong in faith as not to need the caution, yet it is probable the people needed it; and for them these fresh assurances are designed, *I will deliver him into thine hand.* Not only deliver thee out of his hand, that he shall not be thy ruin, but deliver him into thy hand, that thou shalt be his ruin, and make him pay dear for his attempt. He adds, *thou shalt do to him, as thou didst to Sihon;* intimating, that they ought be encouraged by their former victory to trust in God for another victory, for he is God and changeth not.

2. How they got possession of Bashan a very desirable country. They took all the cities, *ver. 4.* and all the spoil of them, *ver. 7.* They made them all their own, *ver. 10.* So that now they had in their hands all that fruitful country which lay east of Jordan, from the river Arnon unto Hermon, *ver. 8.* Their conquering and possessing of these countries was intended, not only for the encouragement of Israel, in the wars of Canaan, but for the satisfaction of Moses before his death; because he must not live to see the completing of their victory and settlement, God thus gives him a specimen of it. Thus the Spirit is given to them that believe as the earnest of their inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession.

12. And this land which we possessed at that time, from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon, and half mount Gilead, and the cities thereof, gave I unto the Reubenites, and to the Gadites. 13. And the rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, being the kingdom of Og, gave I unto the half-tribe of Manasseh; all the region of Argob, with all Bashan, which was called the land of giants. 14. Jair the son of Manasseh took all the country of Argob, unto the coasts of Geshuri, and Maachathi; and called them after his own name, Bashan-havoth-jair, unto this day. 15. And I gave Gilead unto Machir. 16. And unto the Reubenites, and unto the Gadites, I gave from Gilead even unto the river Arnon, half the valley, and the border, even unto the river Jabbok, which is the border of the children of Ammon: 17. The plain also, and Jordan, and the coast thereof, from Chinnereth even unto the sea of the plain, even the salt-sea, under Ashdodpithgah east-ward. 18. ¶ And I commanded you at that time, saying, The LORD your God hath given you this land to possess it: ye shall pass over armed before your brethren the children of Israel, all that are meet for the war. 19. But your wives, and your little ones, and your cattle (for I know that ye have much cattle) shall abide in your cities which I have given you; 20. Until the LORD have given rest unto your brethren, as well as unto you, and until they also possess the land which the LORD your God hath given them beyond Jordan: and then shall ye return every man unto his possession which I have given you.

Having shewed how this country they were now in was conquered, in these verses he shews how it was settled upon the Reubenites, Gadites, and half tribe of Manasseh, which we had the story of before, *Numb. xxxii.* here is the rehearsal.

1. Moses specifies the particular parts of the country that were allotted to each tribe; especially the distribution of the lot to the half tribe of Manasseh, the subdividing of which tribe is observable. Joseph was divided into Ephraim and Manasseh; Manasseh was divided into one half on the one side Jordan, and the other half on the other side: that here on the east-side Jordan was again divided into two great families, which had their several allotments, *Jair, ver. 14.* Machir, *ver. 15.* and perhaps Jacob's prediction of the smallness of that tribe was now accomplished in these divisions and subdivisions. Observe, that Bashan is here called the land of the giants, because it had been in their possession, but Og was the last of them. These giants, it seems, had lost their country, and were rooted out of it sooner than any of their neighbours, for they, who presuming upon their strength and stature, had their hand against every man, had every man's hand against them, and went down slain to the pit, though they were the terror of the mighty in the land of the living.

2. He repeats the condition of the grant, which they had already agreed to, *ver. 18, 19, 20.* That they should send a strong detachment over Jordan to lead the van in the conquest of Canaan, who should not return to their families, at least not to settle; (tho' for a time they might retire thither into winter-quarters, at the end of a campaign) till they had seen their brethren in as full a possession of their respective allotments, as themselves were now in of theirs. They must hereby be taught, not to look at their own things only, but at the things of others, *Phil. ii. 4.* It ill becomes an Israelite to be selfish; and to prefer any private interest before the publick welfare. When we are at rest, we should desire to see our brethren at rest too, and should be ready to do what we can towards it; for we are not born for ourselves, but are members one of another. A good man cannot rejoice much in the comforts of his family, unless withal he sees peace upon Israel, *Psal. cxxviii. 6.*

21. ¶ And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, Thine eyes have seen all that the LORD your God hath done to these two kings: so shall the LORD do unto all the kingdoms whither thou passest. 22. Ye

shall not fear them: for the LORD your God he shall fight for you. 23. And I besought the LORD at that time, saying, 24. O LORD God, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand: for what God is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might? 25. I pray thee let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon. 26. But the LORD was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the LORD said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter. 27. Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and north-ward, and south-ward, and east-ward, and behold it with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan. 28. But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see. 29. So we abode in the valley over against Beth-peor.

Here is, 1. The encouragement Moses gave to Joshua, who was to succeed him in the government, *ver. 21, 22.* He commanded him not to fear. Thus those that are aged, and experienced in the service of God, should do all they can to strengthen the hands of those that are young, and setting out in religion. Two things he would have him consider for his encouragement. (1.) What God had done: Joshua had seen what a total defeat God had given by the forces of Israel to these two kings, and from thence he might easily infer, so shall the Lord do to all the rest of the kingdoms, we are to make war upon. He must not only infer from thence, that thus the Lord can do with them all, for his arm is not shortened, but thus he will do; for his purpose is not changed; he that has begun, will finish; as for God his work is perfect. Joshua had seen it with his own eyes: And the more we have seen of the instances of divine wisdom, power, and goodness, the more inexcusable we are, if we fear what flesh can do unto us. (2.) What God had promised. The Lord your God he shall fight for you; and that cause cannot but be victorious which the Lord of hosts fights for. If God be for us, who can be against us, so as to prevail? We reproach our leader if we follow him trembling.

2. The prayer Moses made for himself, and the answer God gave to that prayer.

1. His prayer was, That, if it were God's will, he might go before Israel over Jordan into Canaan. At that time, when he had been encouraging Joshua to fight Israel's battles; taking it for granted that he must be their leader; upon that occasion he was touched with an earnest desire to go over himself, which expresseth itself not in any passionate and impatient complaints; or reflexions upon the sentence he was under, but in humble prayers to God for a gracious reversing of it. *I besought the Lord.* Note; We should never allow any desires in our hearts which we cannot in faith offer up to God by prayer; and what desires are innocent, let them be presented to God. *We have not;* because we ask not.

Observe 1. What he pleads here. Two things. (1.) The great experience he had had of God's goodness to him in what he had done for Israel. *Thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness.* Lord, perfect what thou hast begun. Thou hast given me to see thy glory in the conquest of these two kings; and the fight has affected me with wonder and thankfulness, O let me see more of the out-goings of my God; my king. This great work; no doubt, will be carried on and completed, let me have the satisfaction of seeing it. Note, The more we see of God's glory in his works, the more we will desire to see. *The works of the Lord are great,* and therefore are sought out more and more of all them that have pleasure therein. (2.) The good impressions that had been made upon his heart by what he had seen; for what god is there in heaven or earth that can do according to thy works! The more we are affected with what we have seen of God; and of his wisdom, power, and goodness, the better prepared we are for further discoveries. Those shall see the works of God that admire him in them. Moses had thus expressed himself, concerning God and his works, long before, *Exod. xv. 11.* and he still continues of the same mind, that there are no works worthy to be compared with God's works, *Psal. lxxxvi. 8.*

2. What he begs. *I pray thee, let me go over,* *ver. 25.* God had said, he should not go over; yet he prays he might; not knowing but that the threatening was conditional, for it was not ratified with an oath, as that concerning the people was, that they should not enter. Thus Hezekiah prayed for his own life; and David for the life of his child, after both had been expressly threatened; and the former prevailed, tho' the latter did not. Moses remembered the time, when he had by prayer prevailed with God to recede from the declarations he had made of his wrath against Israel, as *Exod. xxxii. 14.* And why might he not hope in like manner to prevail for himself? *Let me go over and see the good land.* Not let me go over to be a prince and ruler there; he

he seeks not his own honour, is content to resign the government to Joshua; but let me go to be a spectator of thy kindness to Israel; to see what I believe concerning the goodness of the land of promise. How pathetically doth he speak of Canaan, that *good land*, that *goodly mountain*! Note, Those may hope to obtain and enjoy God's favours, that know how to value them. What he means by *that goodly mountain*, we may learn from *Psal.* lxxviii. 54. where it is said of God's Israel, that *he brought them to the border of his sanctuary, even to this mountain which his right hand had purchased*: Where it is plainly to be understood of the whole land of Canaan, yet with an eye to the sanctuary, the glory of it.

2. God's answer to this prayer had in it a mixture of *mercy and judgment*, that he might sing unto God of both.

1. There was judgment in the denial of his request, and that in something of anger too, *ver. 26. The Lord was wroth with me for your sakes.* God not only sees sin in his people, but is much displeased with it; and even those that are delivered from *the wrath to come*, yet may lie under the tokens of God's wrath in this world; and may be denied some particular favour which their hearts are much upon. God is a gracious, tender, loving father; but he is angry with his children when they do amiss, and denies them many a thing that they desire, and are ready to cry for. But how was he wroth with Moses, *for the sake of Israel*? Either (1.) For that sin which they provoked him to. See *Psal.* cvi. 32, 33. Or (2.) The removal of Moses at that time, when he could so ill be spared, was a rebuke to all Israel, and a punishment of their sin. Or, (3.) It was for their sakes, that it might be a warning to them to take heed of offending God by passionate and unbelieving speeches at any time, after the similitude of his transgression; for if *this were done to such a green tree, what should be done to the dry*? He acknowledges God *would not hear him*. God had often heard him for Israel, yet would not hear him for himself: It was the prerogative of Christ, the great intercessor, to be heard always; yet of him his enemies said, *He saved others, himself he could not save*: Which the Jews would not have upbraided him with, had they considered, that Moses, their great prophet, prevailed for others, but for himself he could not prevail. Tho' Moses being one of the wrestling seed of Jacob, did not seek in vain, yet he had not the thing itself which he sought for. God may accept our prayers, and yet not grant us the very thing we pray for.

2. Here is mercy mixed with this wrath; in several things.

1. God quieted the spirit of Moses under the decree that was gone forth, by that word, *ver. 26. Let it suffice thee.* With which word, no doubt, a divine power went to reconcile Moses to the will of God, and to bring him to acquiesce in it. If God do not by his providence give us what we desire, if by his grace he makes us content without it, it comes much to one. *Let it suffice thee*, to have God for thy father, and Heaven for thy portion, tho' thou hast not every thing thou wouldest have in this world. Be satisfied with this, *God is all-sufficient*.

2. He put an honour upon his prayer, in bespeaking him not to insist upon this request. *Speak no more to me of this matter.* It intimates, That what God doth not think fit to grant, we should not think fit to ask; and that God takes such a pleasure in the prayer of the upright, that it is no pleasure to him, no, not in any particular instance, to give a denial to it.

3. He promised him a sight of Canaan, *from the top of Pisgah, ver. 27.* Tho' he should not have the possession of it, he should have the prospect of it; not to tantalize him, but such a sight of it as would yield him true satisfaction, and would enable him to form a very clear and pleasing idea of that promised land. Probably, Moses had not only his sight preserved for other purposes, but greatly enlarged for this purpose; for if he were not to have such a sight of it as others could not have from the same place, it had been no particular favour to Moses, nor the matter of a promise. Even great believers, in this present state, see heaven but at a distance.

4. He provided him a successor, one who should support the honour of Moses, and carry on and compleat that glorious work, which the heart of Moses was so much upon, the bringing of Israel to Canaan, and settling them there, *ver. 28. Charge Joshua, and encourage him in this work.* Those to whom God gives a charge, he will be sure to give encouragement to. And it is a comfort to the church's friends, when they are dying and going off, to see God's work likely to be carried on by other hands, when they are silent in the dust.

C H A P. IV.

In this chapter we have, 1. A most earnest and pathological exhortation to obedience, both in general and in some particular instances backed with a great variety of very pressing arguments, repeated again and again, and set before them in the most moving and affectionate manner imaginable, *ver. 1—40.* 2. The appointing the cities of refuge on that side Jordan, *ver. 41—43.* 3. The particular description of the place where Moses delivered the following repetition of the law, *ver. 44—49.*

1. **N**OW therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes, and unto the judgments which I teach you, for to do *them*, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you. 2. Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. 3. Your eyes have seen what the LORD did because of Baal-peor: for all the men that followed Baal-peor, the LORD thy God hath destroyed them from among you. 4. But ye that did cleave unto the LORD your God, are alive every one of you this day. 5. Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. 6. Keep therefore and do *them*, for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. 7. For what nation is *there* so great, who *bath* God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all *things* that we call upon him for? 8. And what nation is *there* so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous, as all this law which I set before you this day? 9. Only take heed to thy self, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons sons: 10. *Specially* the day that thou stoodst before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and *that* they may teach their children. 11. And ye came near and stood under the mountain, and the mountain burnt with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness. 12. And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude, only ye heard a voice. 13. And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, *even* ten commandments, and he wrote them upon two tables of stone. 14. ¶ And the LORD commanded me at that time, to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it. 15. Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves (for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day *that* the LORD spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire) 16. Lest ye corrupt *your selves*, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, 17. The likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, 18. The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth. 19. And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, *even* all the host of heaven, shouldst be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the LORD thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven. 20. But the LORD hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, *even* out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day. 21. Furthermore, the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, and sware that I should not go over Jordan, and that I should not go in unto that good land which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance. 22. But I must die in this land, I must not go over Jordan: but ye shall go over and possess that good land. 23. Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, *or* the likeness of any *thing* which the LORD thy God hath forbidden thee. 24. For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, *even* a jealous God. 25. ¶ When thou shalt beget children, and childrens children, and shalt have remained long in the land, and shalt corrupt *yourselves*, and make a graven image, *or* the likeness of any *thing*, and shall do evil in the sight of the LORD thy God, to provoke him to anger: 26. I call heaven and earth to witness against you this-day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from

from off the land whereunto you go over Jordan to possess it: ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed. 27. And the LORD shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the LORD shall lead you. 28. And there ye shall serve gods, the work of mens hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. 29. But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart, and with all thy soul. 30. When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, *even* in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice: 31. (For the LORD is a merciful God) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them. 32. For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been *any such thing* as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? 33. Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard and live? 34. Or, hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? 35. Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he is God; *there is none else besides him.* 36. Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he shewed thee his great fire, and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire. 37. And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt: 38. To drive out nations from before thee, greater and mightier than thou art, to bring thee in to give thee their land for an inheritance, as it is this day. 39. Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: *there is none else.* 40. Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for ever.

This most lively and excellent discourse is so entire, and the particulars of it so oft repeated, that we must take it all together in the exposition of it, and endeavour to digest it into proper heads, for we cannot divide it into paragraphs.

1. In general, it is the use and application of the foregoing history; it comes in by way of inference from it, *ver. 1. Now therefore hearken, O Israel.* This use we should make of the review of God's providences concerning us, we should by them be quickened and engaged to duty and obedience. The histories of the years of ancient times should in like manner be approved by us.

2. The scope and drift of his discourse is to persuade them to keep close to God, and to his service, and not to forsake him for any other god, nor in any instance to decline from their duty to him. Now observe what he saith to them with a great deal of divine rhetoric. (1.) By way of exhortation and direction. (2.) By way of motive and argument to enforce his exhortations.

1. See here how he charges and commands them, and shews them *what is good, and what the Lord required of them.*

1. He demands their diligent attention to the word of God, and to the statutes and judgments that were taught them. *Hearken, O Israel.* He means not only that they must now give him the hearing, but that whenever the book of the law was read to them, or read by them, they should be attentive to it. Hearken to the statutes, as containing the great commands of God, and the great concerns of your own souls, and therefore challenging your utmost attention. At Horeb God had *made them hear his words*, *ver. 10.* hear them with a witness; the attention which was then constrained by the circumstances of the delivery, ought ever after to be engaged by the excellency of the things themselves. What God so *spoke once* we should *hear twice*, hear often.

2. He charges them to preserve the divine law, pure and entire among them, *ver. 2.* Keep it *pure*, and do not *add to it*, keep it *intire*, and do not *diminish from it.* Not in practice; so

some; ye shall not *add*, by committing the evil which the law forbids; nor *diminish*, by omitting the good which the law requires: Not in opinion; so others, ye shall not *add* your own inventions, as if the divine institutions were defective, nor *introduce*, much less *impose*, any rites of religious worship other than what God has appointed; nor shall ye *diminish*, or set aside, anything that is appointed, as needless, or superfluous. God's work is perfect, nothing can be *put to it* or *taken from it*, but it makes it the worse. See *Ecc. iii. 14.* The Jews understand it as prohibiting the alteration of the text or letter of the law, even in the least jot or title. And to their great care and exactness herein we owe very much, under God, the purity and integrity of the Hebrew code. We find a fence like this made about the New Testament in the close of it, *Rev. xxii. 18, 19.*

3. He charges them to keep God's *commandments*, *ver. 2.* to *do them*, *ver. 5, 14.* to *keep and do them*, *ver. 6.* to *perform the covenant*, *ver. 13.* Hearing must be in order to doing; knowledge in order to practice. God's commandments were the way they must keep in, the rule they must keep to; they must govern themselves by the moral precepts; perform their devotion according to the divine ritual; and administer justice according to the judicial law. He concludes his discourse, *ver. 40.* with this repeated charge, *Thou shalt keep his statutes and his commandments which I command thee.* What are laws made for but to be observed and obeyed?

4. He charges them to be very strict and careful in their observance of the law, *ver. 9.* *Only take heed to thy self and keep thy soul diligently*, and *ver. 15.* *Take ye therefore good heed unto your selves:* And again, *ver. 23.* *Take heed to your selves.* Those that would be religious must be very cautious, and walk circumspectly. Considering how many temptations we are compassed about with, and what corrupt inclinations we have in our own bosoms, we have great need to look about us, and to keep our hearts with all diligence. Those cannot walk aright that walk carelessly, and at all adventures.

5. He charges them particularly to take heed of the sin of idolatry, that sin which of all other they would be most tempted to by the customs of the nations, were most addicted to by the corruption of their hearts, and would be most provoking to God, and of most pernicious consequence to themselves: *Take good heed*, left, in this matter, ye *corrupt your selves*, *ver. 15, 16.* Two sorts of idolatry he cautions them against.

1. The worship of images, however by them they might intend to worship the true God, as they had done in the golden calf; so changing the *truth of God into a lie*, and his *glory into shame.* The second commandment is expressly directed against this, and it is here enlarged upon, *ver. 15, 16, 17, 18.* Take heed *lest ye corrupt your selves*, *i. e.* lest ye debauch yourselves; for they that think to make images of God, form in their minds such notions of him, as must needs be an inlet to all impieties; and it is intimated that it is a spiritual adultery: and take heed lest you destroy yourselves. If any thing ruin you, this will be it. Whatever you do, make no similitude of God, either in a human shape, *male or female*; or, in the shape of any *beast or fowl, serpent or fish*; for the Heathen worshipped their gods by images of all these kinds, being either not able to form, or not willing to admit, that plain demonstration which we find, *Hos. viii. 6.* *The workman made it, therefore it is not God.* To represent an infinite Spirit by an image; and the great Creator by the image of a creature, is the greatest affront we can put upon God, and the greatest cheat we can put upon ourselves.

As an argument against their making images of God, he urgeth it very much upon them, that when God made himself known to them at Horeb, he did it by a voice of words which founded in their ears, to teach them that *faith comes by hearing*, and God in the word is *nigh us*; but not by any image presented to their eye; for to *see God as he is*, is reserved for our happiness in the other world, and to *see him as he is not*, will do us hurt and no good in this world. Ye saw *no similitude*, *ver. 12.* *no manner of similitude*, *ver. 15.* It is probable, they expected to have seen some similitude, for they were ready to *break through unto the Lord to gaze*, *Exod. xix. 21.* But all they saw was *light and fire*, and nothing that they could make an image of; God in infinite wisdom so ordering his manifestation of himself, because of the *peril of idolatry.* It is said indeed of Moses, that he *beheld the similitude of the Lord*, *Num. xii. 8.* God allowing him that favour, because he was above the temptation of idolatry; but for the people who were newly come from admiring the idols of Egypt, they must see no resemblance of God, lest they should have pretended to copy it, and so should have received the second commandment in vain; for (saith bishop Patrick) they would have thought that that forbade them only to make any other representation of God, besides that wherein he shewed himself to them, in which they would have concluded it lawful to represent him. Let this be a caution to us, to take heed of making images of God in our fancy, and imagination, when we are worshipping him, lest thereby we *corrupt ourselves.* There may be idols in the heart, where there are none in the sanctuary.

2. The worship of the sun, moon, and stars, is another sort of idolatry they are here cautioned against, *ver. 14.* This was the first and most ancient idolatry of all other, and the most plausible

visible, drawing the adoration to those creatures, that not only are in situation above us, but are most sensibly glorious in themselves, and most generally serviceable to the world. And the plausibility of it made it the more dangerous. It is intimated here. (1.) How strong the temptation is to sense; for the caution is, *lest thou shouldst be driven to worship them*, by the strong impulse of a vain imagination, and the impetuous torrent of the customs of the nations. The heart is supposed to *walk after the eye*, which in our corrupt and degenerate state it is very apt to do. *When thou seest the sun, moon and stars*, thou wilt so admire their height and brightness, their regular motion, and powerful influence, that thou wilt be strongly tempted to give that glory to them which is due to him that made them, and made them what they are to us; gave them their beings, and made them blessings to the world. It seems there was need of a great deal of resolution to arm them against this temptation; so weak was their faith in an invisible God, and an invisible world. (2.) Yet he shews how weak the temptation would be to those that would use their reason; for these pretended deities, the *sun, moon and stars*, were only blessings which the Lord their God, whom they were obliged to worship, had imparted to all nations. It is absurd to worship them, for (1.) They are man's servants, were made and ordained to give light on the earth, and shall we serve those that were made to serve us? The sun, in Hebrew, is called *Shemesh*, which signifies a *servant*, for it is the minister-general of this visible world, and holds the candle to all mankind; let it not then be worshipped as a lord. (2.) They are God's gifts: He has imparted them, whatever benefit we have by them we owe it to him, it is therefore highly injurious to him to give that honour and praise to them which is due to him only.

6. He charges them to teach their children to observe the law of God. *Teach them thy sons, and thy sons sons*, ver. 9. *that they may teach their children*, ver. 10. (1.) Care must be taken in general to preserve the entail of religion among them, and to transmit the knowledge and worship of God to posterity; for the kingdom of God in Israel was designed to be perpetual, if they did not forfeit the privilege of it. (2.) Parents must, in order hereunto, particularly take care to teach their own children the fear of God, and to train them up in an observance of all his commandments.

7. He charges them never to forget their duty, ver. 23. *Take heed lest you forget the covenant of the Lord your God*. Tho' God is ever mindful of the covenant, we are apt to forget it; and that is at the bottom of all our departures from God: We have need therefore to watch against all those things which would put the covenant out of our minds, and to watch over our own hearts, lest at any time we let it slip, and so we must take heed lest at any time we forget our religion, lest we lose it, or leave it off. Care and caution, and holy watchfulness, are the best helps against a bad memory. These are the directions and commands he gives them.

2. Let us see now what are the motives or arguments with which he backs these exhortations. How doth he order the cause before them, and *fill his mouth with arguments*! And a great deal he has to say on God's behalf: Some of his topicks are indeed peculiar to that people, yet applicable to us. But upon the whole it is evident, That religion has reason on its side, the powerful charms of which, all that are irreligious wilfully stop their ears to.

1. He urges the *greatness, glory, and goodness of God*. Did we consider what a God he is with whom we have to do, we would surely make conscience of our duty to him, and would not dare to sin against him. He minds them here, (1.) That the Lord Jehovah is the *one only living and true God*. This they must *know and consider*, ver. 39. There are many things which we know, but are not the better for, because we do not consider them, we do not apply them to ourselves, nor draw proper inferences from them. This is a truth so evident that it cannot but be known, and so improvable that, if it were duly considered it, would effectually reform the world. *That the Lord Jehovah he is God*, an infinite and eternal Being, self-existent and self-sufficient, and the fountain of all being, power, and motion; that he is *God in heaven above*, clothed with all the glory, and Lord of all the hosts, of the upper world, and that he is *God upon earth beneath*, which, tho' distant from the throne of his glory, is not out of the reach of his sight or power; and tho' despicable and mean is not below his care and cognizance. And *there is none else*; no true and living God but he; all the deities of the Heathen were counterfeits and usurpers; nor did any of them so much as pretend to be universal monarchs in heaven and earth, but were only local deities. Israel that worshipped no other but the supreme *Numen* were for ever inexcusable, if they either changed their God, or neglected him. (2.) That he is a *consuming fire, a jealous God*, ver. 24. Take heed of offending him, for (1.) He has a jealous eye to discern an affront; he must have your intire affection and adoration, and will by no means endure a rival. God's jealousy over us is a good reason for our godly jealousy over ourselves. (2.) He has a heavy hand, to punish an affront, especially in his worship, for there he is in a special manner jealous; he is a *consuming fire*; his wrath against sinners is so, it is dreadful and destroying, it is a *fiery indignation* which will devour the

adversaries, Heb. x. 27. Fire consumes that only which is fuel for it, so the wrath of God fastens upon those only who, by their own sin, have fitted themselves for destruction, 1 Cor. iii. 13. Isa. xxvii. 4. Even in the New Testament we find the same argument urged upon us, as a reason why we should serve God with reverence, Heb. xii. 28, 29. because tho' he be our God, and a rejoicing light to those that serve him faithfully, yet he is a *consuming fire* to those that trifle with him. (3.) That yet he is a *merciful God*, ver. 31. It comes in here as an encouragement to repentance, but might serve as an inducement to obedience, and a consideration proper to prevent their apostasy. Shall we forsake a *merciful God*, who will never *forsake us*, as it follows here, if we be faithful unto him. Whither can we go to mend ourselves? Shall we forget the covenant of our God, who will not *forget the covenant of our fathers*? Let us be held to our duty by the bonds of love, and prevailed with by the *mercies of God* to cleave to him.

2. He urges their relation to this God, his authority over them, and their obligations to him. The commandments you are to keep and do are not mine, saith Moses, not my inventions, not my injunctions, but they are the commandments of the Lord, framed by infinite wisdom, enacted by sovereign power, he is the *Lord God of your fathers*, ver. 1. so that you are his by inheritance, your fathers were his, and you were born in his house. He is the *Lord your God*, ver. 2. so that you are his by your own consent. He is the *Lord my God*, ver. 5. so that I treat with you as his agent and ambassador, and in his name Moses delivered unto them all that, and that only, which he had received from the Lord.

3. He urges the *wisdom of being religious*, ver. 6. *for this is your wisdom in the sight of the nations*: In keeping God's commandments, 1. They would act wisely for themselves. *This is your wisdom*. It is not only agreeable to right reason, but highly conducive to our true interest; this is one of the first and most ancient maxims of divine revelation, *The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom*, Job xxviii. 28. 2. They would answer the expectations of their neighbours, who, upon reading or hearing the precepts of the law that was given them, would conclude, that certainly the people that were governed by this law, were a *wise and understanding people*. Great things may justly be looked for from those that are guided by divine revelation, and unto whom are committed the *oracles of God*; they must needs be wiser and better than other people; and so they are, if they are ruled by the rules that are given them; and if they are not, tho' reproach may for their sakes be cast upon the religion they profess, yet it will in the end certainly return upon themselves to their eternal confusion. Those that enjoy the benefit of divine light and laws, ought to carry themselves so as to support their own *reputation for wisdom and honour*, (see Eccl. x. 1.) that God may be glorified thereby.

4. He urges the singular advantages they enjoyed by virtue of the happy establishment they were under, ver. 7, 8. our communion with God, (which is the highest honour and happiness we are capable of in this world) is kept up by the word and prayer; in both these, Israel was happy above any people under heaven.

(1.) Never was any people so privileged in speaking to God, ver. 7. he was nigh unto them in all that they called upon him for, ready to answer their enquiries, and resolve them by his oracle; ready to answer their requests, and to grant them, by a particular providence. When they had cried unto God for bread, for water, for healing, they had found him near them, to succour and relieve them, a very present help, and in the midst of them, Ps. xli. 1, 5. his ear open to their prayers. Observe, 1. it is the character of God's Israel that on all occasions they call upon him, in every thing they make their requests known to God. They do nothing but what they consult him in, they desire nothing but what they come to him for. 2. Those that call upon God shall certainly find him within call, and ready to give an answer of peace to every prayer of faith; see Isa. lviii. 9. *Thou shalt cry*, as the child for the nurse, *and he shall say, here I am*, what doth my dear child cry for. 3. This is a privilege which makes the Israel of God truly great and honourable: What can go further than this to magnify a people, or person? Is any name more illustrious than that of Israel, a *prince with God*? *What nation is there so great*? Other nations might boast of greater numbers, larger territories, and more ancient incorporations, but none could boast of such an interest in heaven as Israel had. They had their gods, but not so nigh to them as Israel's God was; they could not help them in a time of need, as 1 Kin. xviii. 27.

(2.) Never was any people so privileged in hearing from God, by the statutes and judgments which were set before them, ver. 8. this also was the grandure of Israel above any people. *What nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous*? Observe, 1. that all the statutes and judgments of the divine law are infinitely just and righteous, above the statutes and judgments of any of the nations. The law of God is far more excellent than the law of nations. No law so consonant to natural equity, and the unprejudiced dictates of right reason, so consistent with itself in all the parts of it, and so conducive to the welfare and interest of mankind as the scripture-law is, Psal. cxix. 123. 2. The having of these statutes and judgments set before them, is the true and transcendent greatness of any nation or people. See Psal.

Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20. It is an honour to us that we have the Bible in reputation and power among us. It is an evidence of a peoples being high in the favour of God, and a means of making them high among the nations. They that magnify the law shall be magnified by it.

5. He urges God's glorious appearances to them at mount Sinai, when he gave them this law. This he insists much upon. Take heed *lest thou forget the day that thou stoodst before the Lord thy God in Horeb*, ver. 10. Some of them were now alive that could remember it, tho' they were then under twenty years of age, and the rest of them might be said to stand there in the loins of their fathers, who received the law and entered into covenant there, not for themselves only, but for their children, to whom God had an eye particularly in giving the law, that they might teach it their children.

Two things they must remember, and one would think they should never forget them.

1. What they saw at mount Sinai, ver. 11. they saw a strange composition of fire and darkness, both dreadful and very awful; and they must needs be a mighty foil to each other; the darkness made the fire in the midst of it look the more dreadful: Fires in the night are most frightful, and the fire made the darkness that surrounded it look the more awful; for it must needs be a strong darkness which such a fire did not disperse. In allusion to this appearance upon mount Sinai, God is said to shew himself for his people, and against his and their enemies, in fire and darkness together, *Psal.* xviii. 8, 9.

He tells them again, ver. 36. what they saw, for he would have them never to forget it, he *shewed thee his great fire*. One flash of lightning, that fire from heaven, strikes an awe upon us; and some have observed that most creatures naturally turn their face towards the lightning, as ready to receive the impressions of it; but how dreadful then must a constant fire from heaven be! It gave an earnest of the day of judgment in which the Lord Jesus shall be revealed in flaming fire.

As he minds them of what they saw, so he tells them what they saw not; no manner of similitude, from which they might form either an idea of God in their fancies, or an image of God in their high places. By what we see of God, sufficient ground is given us to believe him a being of infinite power and perfection, but no occasion given us to suspect him to have a body such as we have.

2. What they heard at mount Sinai, ver. 12. *The Lord spake unto you* with an intelligible voice, in your own language, and you heard it. This he enlargeth upon towards the close of his discourse, ver. 32, 33, 36. (1.) *They heard the voice of God, speaking out of heaven*. God manifests himself to all the world in the works of creation, without speech or language, and yet their voice is heard, *Psal.* xix. 2. but to Israel he made himself known by speech and language, condescending to the weakness of the church's infant-state. Here was the *voice of one crying in the wilderness, to prepare the way of the Lord*. (2.) They heard it out of the midst of the fire, which shewed, that it was God himself that spoke to them, for who else could dwell with devouring fire? God spake to Job out of the whirlwind, which was terrible; but to Israel out of the fire, which was more terrible. We have reason to be thankful that he doth not thus speak to us, but by men like ourselves, *whose terror shall not make us afraid*, Job xxxiii. 6, 7: (3.) They heard it and yet lived, ver. 33. It was a wonder of mercy that the fire did not devour them, or that they did not die for fear, when Moses himself trembled. (4.) Never any people heard the like. He bids them inquire of former days, and distant places, and they will find this favour of God to Israel without precedent or parallel, ver. 32. this singular honour done them, called for singular obedience from them. It might justly be expected they should do more for God than other people, since God had done so much more for them.

6. He urges God's gracious appearances for them, in bringing them out of Egypt, from the iron-furnace, where they laboured in the fire, forming them into a people, and then taking them to be his own people, a *people of inheritance*, ver. 20. this he mentions again, ver. 34, 37, 38. Never did God do such a thing for any people: the rise of this nation, was quite different from the origin of all other nations. (1.) They were thus dignified and distinguished, not for any thing in them that was deserving or inviting, but because God had a kindness for their fathers, he chose them. See the reasons of free grace; we are not beloved for our own sakes, but for his sake who is the great trustee of the covenant. (2.) They were delivered out of Egypt by miracles and signs, in mercy to them, and in judgment upon the Egyptians, against whom God stretched out his arm, which was signified by Moses's stretching out his hand in summoning the plagues.

(3.) They were designed for a happy settlement in Canaan, ver. 38. Nations must be driven out from before them, to make room for them, to shew how much dearer they were to God than any other people were. Egyptians and Canaanites must both be sacrificed to Israel's honour and interest. They that stand in Israel's light, in Israel's way, it is at their peril.

7. He urges God's righteous appearance against them sometimes for their sins. He instanceth particularly in the matter of Peor; ver. 34. this had happened very lately; their eyes had seen but

No xiii.

the other day, the sudden destruction of those that joined themselves to Baal-Peor, and the preservation of those that clave to the Lord; from which they might easily infer the danger of apostasy from God, and the benefit of adherence to him. He also takes notice again of God's displeasure against himself, ver. 21, 22. *The Lord was angry with me for your sakes*. He mentions this to try their ingenuity, whether they would really be troubled for the great prejudice they had occasioned to their faithful friend and leader. Others sufferings for our sakes, should grieve us more than our own.

8. He urges the certain benefit and advantage of obedience. This argument he begins with, ver. 1. *That ye may live, and go in and possess the land*; and this he concludes with, ver. 40. *That it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee*. He minds them that they were upon their good behaviour, their prosperity would depend upon their piety. If they kept God's precepts, he would undoubtedly fulfil his promises.

9. He urges the *fatal consequences of their apostasy from God*: That it would undoubtedly be the ruin of their nation. This he enlarges upon, ver. 25—31. Where, 1. He foresees their revolt from God to idols; that in process of time, when they had remained long in the land, and were settled upon their lees, they *would corrupt themselves, and make a graven image*; this was the sin that would most easily beset them, ver. 25.

2. He foretels the judgments of God upon them for this, *Ye shall utterly be destroyed*, ver. 26. *Scattered among the nations*, ver. 27. And their sin should be made their punishment, ver. 28. *There shall ye serve gods, the work of mens hands*, be compelled to serve them, whether ye will or no; or, through your own selfishness and stupidity, you will find no better succours to apply yourselves to in your captivity. Those that cast off the duties of religion in their prosperity, cannot expect the comforts of it when they come to be in distress. Justly are they then sent to the *gods whom they have served*, Judges x. 14.

3. Yet he encourages them to hope that God would reserve mercy for them in the latter days; that he would by his judgments upon them, bring them to repentance, and take them again into covenant with himself, ver. 29, 30, 31. Where observe, (1.) That whatever place we are in, we may *from thence seek the Lord our God*, tho' never so remote from our own land, or from his holy temple. There is no part of this earth that has a gulf fixed between it and heaven. (2.) They, and they only, shall find God to their comfort, who seek him with all their heart, *i. e.* that are entirely devoted to him, and earnestly desirous of his favour, and solicitous to obtain it. (3.) Afflictions are sent to engage and quicken us to seek God, and, by the grace of God working with them, many are reduced to their right mind. When these things are come upon thee, it is to be hoped thou wilt *turn to the Lord thy God*, for thou seest what comes of turning from him, see *Dan.* ix. 11, 12. (4.) God's faithfulness to his covenant encourageth us to hope, that he will not reject us, tho' we are driven to him by affliction. If we at length remember the covenant, we shall find that he has not forgotten it.

Now let all these arguments be laid together, and then say, whether religion has not reason on its side? None cast off the government of their God, but those that have first abandoned the understanding of a man.

41. ¶ Then Moses severed three cities on this side Jordan, toward the sun-rising: 42. That the slayer might flee thither, which should kill his neighbour unawares, and hated him not in times past; and that fleeing unto one of these cities, he might live: 43. *Namely*, Bezer in the wilderness, in the plain country, of the Reubenites; and Ramoth in Gilead, of the Gadites; and Golan in Bashan, of the Manassites. 44. ¶ And this is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel: 45. *These are the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which Moses spake unto the children of Israel, after they came forth out of Egypt*: 46. On this side Jordan in the valley over against Beth-peor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon, whom Moses and the children of Israel smote, after they were come forth out of Egypt: 47. And they possessed his land, and the land of Og king of Bashan, two kings of the Amorites, which were on this side Jordan, toward the sun-rising; 48. From Aroer, which is by the bank of the river Arnon, even unto mount Sion, which is Hermon. 49. And all the plain on this side Jordan eastward, even unto the sea of the plain, under the springs of Pishgah.

Here is, 1. The nomination of the cities of refuge on that side Jordan where Israel now lay encamped. Three cities were appointed for that purpose, one in the lot of Reuben, another in that of Gad, and another in that of the half tribe of Manasseh, ver. 41, 42, 43. What Moses could do for that people while he was yet with them, he did, to give example to the rulers that

were settled; that they might observe them the better when he was gone.

2. The introduction to another sermon that Moses preached to Israel, which we have in the following chapters. Probably, it was preached the next sabbath-day after, when the congregation attended to receive instruction. He had in general exhorted them to obedience in the former chapter; here he comes to repeat the law which they were to observe; for he demands an universal, but not an implicit, obedience. How can we do our duty, if we do not know it? Here therefore he sets the law before them, as the rule they were to work by, the way they were to walk in: sets it before them, as the glass in which they were to see their natural face, that looking into this perfect law of liberty, they might continue therein. *These are the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments*, the moral, ceremonial, and judicial laws, which had been enacted before, when Israel was newly come out of Egypt, and were now repeated, *on this side Jordan*, ver. 44, 45, 46. The place where Moses gave them these laws in charge, is here particularly described. It was (1.) over against Beth-peor, an idol temple of the Moabites, which, perhaps, Moses sometimes looked towards with a particular caution to them; against the infection of that, and other such like dangerous places. (2.) It was upon their new conquests, in the very land which they had got out of the hands of Sihon and Og, and were now actually in possession of, ver. 47. Their present triumphs herein were a powerful argument for obedience.

C H A P. V.

In this chapter we have the second edition of the ten commandments.

1. *The general intent of them; they were in the nature of a covenant between God and Israel*, ver. 1—5. 2. *The particular precepts are repeated*, ver. 6—21. *With the double delivery of them, both by word and writing*, ver. 22. 3. *The settling of the correspondence from thence forward between God and Israel, by the mediation and ministry of Moses*. 1. *It was Israel's humble petition that it might be so*, ver. 23—27. 2. *It was God's gracious grant that it should be so*, ver. 28—31. *And from hence he infers the obligation they were under to obedience*, ver. 32.

1. **A**ND Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that you may learn them, and keep and do them. 2. The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. 3. The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, *even us*, who *are* all of us here alive this day. 4. The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, 5. (I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to shew you the word of the LORD: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount) saying,

Here, 1. Moses summons the assembly. He called all Israel, not only the elders, but it is likely, as many of the people as could come within hearing, ver. 1. The greatest of them were not above God's command, nor the meanest of them below his cognizance; but they were all concerned to hear, what they were all bound to do.

2. He demands attention. *Hear, O Israel*; hear and heed, hear and remember. Hear, that you may learn, and keep, and do; else your hearing is to no purpose. When we hear the word of God, we must set our selves to learn it, that we may have it ready to us upon all occasions, and what we have learned, we must put in practice, for that is the end of hearing and learning; not to fill our heads with notions, or our mouths with talk, but to rectify and direct our affections, and conversations.

3. He refers them to the covenant made with them in Horeb; as that which they must govern themselves by. See the wonderful condescension of divine grace in turning the command into a covenant, that we might be the more strongly bound to obedience by our own consent, and the more encouraged in it by the divine promise, both which are supposed in the covenant. The promises and threatnings annexed to some of the precepts, as to the second, third, and fifth, make them amount to a covenant. Observe, 1. The parties to this covenant. God made it *not with our fathers*, not with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; to them God gave the *covenant of circumcision*, Acts vii. 8. But not that of the *ten commandments*. The light of divine revelation shone gradually, and the children were made to know more of God's mind, than their fathers had done. The covenant was made with us, or our immediate parents, that represented us, before mount Sinai, and transacted for us. (2.) The publication of this covenant; God himself did as it were read the articles to them, ver. 4. He *talked with you face to face*. *Word to word*. So the Chaldee. Not in dark visions, as of old he spake to the fathers, Job iv. 12, 13. But openly and

clearly, and so as that all the thousands of Israel might hear and understand. He spake to them; and then received the answer they returned to him: thus was it transacted *face to face*. (3.) The mediator of the covenant, *Moses stood before God and them*, at the foot of the mount, ver. 5: and carried messages between them both for the settling of the preliminaries; *Exod. xix.* and for the exchanging of the ratifications, *Exod. xxiv.* Herein Moses was a type of Christ, who *stands between God and man*, to *show us the word of the Lord*: a blessed day's-man, that has laid his hand upon us both, so that we may both hear from God, and speak to him without trembling.

6. ¶ I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. 7. Thou shalt have none other gods before me. 8. Thou shalt not make thee *any* graven image, or any likeness of *any thing* that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth. 9. Thou shalt not bow down thy self unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, 10. And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments. 11. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain: for the LORD will not hold *him* guiltless that taketh his name in vain. 12. Keep the sabbath-day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee. 13. Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work: 14. But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou. 15. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day. 16. ¶ Honour thy father, and thy mother as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged: and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. 17. Thou shalt not kill. 18. Neither shalt thou commit adultery. 19. Neither shalt thou steal. 20. Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbour. 21. Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, or his man-servant, or his maid-servant, his ox, or his ass, or any *thing* that is thy neighbour's. 22. ¶ These words the LORD spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice, and he added no more; and he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me.

Here is the repetition of the ten commandments; in which observe, 1. Tho' they had been spoken before, and written, yet they are again rehearsed: for precept must be upon precept, and line upon line, and all little enough to keep the word of God in our minds, and to preserve and renew the impressions of it. We have need to have the same things oft inculcated upon us. See *Phil. iii. 1.*

2. There is some variation here from that record, *Exod. xx.* as there is between the Lord's prayer, as it is in *Mat. vi.* and as it is *Luke xi.* in both it is more necessary that we tie ourselves to the things, than to the words unalterably.

3. The most considerable variation is in the fourth commandment, *Exod. xx.* The reason annexed, is taken from the creation of the world; here it is taken from their deliverance out of Egypt, because that was typical of our redemption by Jesus Christ, in remembrance of which the christian sabbath was to be observed, ver. 15. *Remember that thou wast a servant, and God brought thee out.* And therefore, (1.) It is fit that thy servants should be favoured by the sabbath-rest; for thou knowest the heart of a servant, and how welcome one day's ease will be after six days labour. (2.) It is fit that thy God should be honoured by the sabbath-work, and the religious services of the day in consideration of the great things he has done for thee. In the resurrection of Christ we were brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God: *With a mighty hand, and an out-stretched arm*, therefore by the gospel edition of the law, we are directed to observe the first day of the week, in remembrance of that glorious work of power and grace.

4. It is added in the fifth commandment, *that it may go well with thee*, which addition the apostle quotes, and puts first, *Eph. vi. 3. That it may be well with thee, and that thou mayst live long.* If there be instances of some that have been very dutiful to their parents, and yet have not lived long upon earth, we may reconcile it to the promise, by this explication of it, whether they live long or no, it shall go well with them, either in this world, or in a better. See *Ecc. viii. 12.*

5. The five last commandments are connected or coupled together, which they are not in Exodus: *neither shalt thou commit adultery, neither shalt thou steal, &c.* Which intimates, that God's commands are all of a piece, the same authority that obliges us to one, obliges us to another; and we must not be partial in the law, but have respect to all God's commandments; for he that *offends in one point, is guilty of all*, *Jam. ii. 10, 11.*

6. That these commandments were given with a great deal of awful solemnity, *ver. 22.* (1.) They were spoken with *a great voice out of the fire and thick darkness.* That was a dispensation of terror, designed to make the gospel of grace the more welcome, and to be a specimen of the terrors of the judgment-day, *Psal. l. 3; 4.* (2.) *He added no more.* What other laws he gave them, were sent by Moses, but no more were spoken in the same manner, that the ten commandments were. *He added no more,* therefore we must not add: the law of the Lord is perfect. (3.) *He wrote them in two tables of stone,* that they might be preserved from corruption, and might be transmitted pure and entire to posterity, for whose use they were intended as well as for the present generation. These being the heads of the covenant, the chest in which the written tables were deposited, was called the *ark of the covenant.* See *Rev. xi. 19.*

23. And it came to pass when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness (for the mountain did burn with fire) that ye came near unto me, *even all the heads of your tribes, and your elders.* 24. And ye said, Behold, the LORD our God hath shewed us his glory, and his greatness; and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth. 25. Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us. If we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we shall die. 26. For who is there of all flesh that hath heard the voice of the living God, speaking out of the midst of the fire (as we have) and lived? 27. Go thou near, and hear all that the LORD our God shall say; and speak thou unto us all that the LORD our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it. 28. And the LORD heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the LORD said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken. 29. O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever. 30. Go say to them, Get you into your tents again. 31. But as for thee, stand thou here by me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments which thou shalt teach them, that they may do *them* in the land which I give them to possess it. 32. Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 33. You shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and *that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess.*

Here, 1. Moses minds them of the agreement of both the parties that were now treating, in the mediation of Moses.

1. Here is the mighty consternation that the people were put into, by that extream terror with which the law was given. They owned, they could not bear it any more; *this great fire will consume us;* this dreadful voice will be fatal to us, we shall certainly die, if we hear it any more, *ver. 25.* They wondered that they were not already struck dead with it, and took it for an extraordinary instance of the divine power and goodness, not only that they were thus spoken to, but that they were enabled to bear it. For, *who ever heard the voice of the living God, as we have, and lived?* God's appearances have always been terrible to man, ever since the fall: but Christ, having taken away sin, invites us to come boldly to the throne of grace.

2. Their earnest request, that God would from hence forward speak to them by Moses, with a promise that they would hear what he said, as from God himself, and do it, *ver. 27.* It seems

by this, (1.) That they expected to receive further commands from God, and were willing to hear more from him. (2.) That they thought Moses able to bear these discoveries of the divine glory, which they, by reason of guilt, were sensible of their inability to stand up under. They believed him to be a favourite of heaven, and also one that would be faithful to them; yet at other times they murmured at him, and but a little before this, were ready to stone him, *Exod. xvii. 4.* See how mens convictions correct their passions. (3.) That now they were in a good mind, under the strong convictions of the word they heard. Many have their consciences startled by the law, that have them not purified: fair promises are extorted from them, but no good principles fixed and rooted in them.

3. God's approbation of their request. (1.) He commends what they said, *ver. 28.* They spoke it to Moses, but God took notice of it; for there is not a word in our tongue, but he knows it. He acknowledges, they have *well said.* Their owning the necessity of a mediator to deal between them and God, was well said. Their desire to receive further directions from God by Moses, and their promise to observe what directions should be given them, were *well said.* And what is *well said,* shall have its praise with God, and should have with us. What is good, as far as it goes, let it be commended. (2.) He wishes they were but sincere in it, *ver. 29.* *O that there were such a heart in them!* (1.) Such a heart as they should have; a heart to fear God, and keep his commandments for ever. Note, The God of heaven is truly and earnestly desirous of the welfare and salvation of poor sinners: he has given abundant proof that he is so; he gives us time and space to repent; by his mercies invites to repentance, and waits to be gracious; has sent his Son to redeem us, published a general offer of pardon and life, has promised his Spirit to those that pray for him, and has said it, and sworn, that he hath no pleasure in the ruin of sinners. (2.) Such a heart as they now had, or one would think they had. Note, It would be well with many, if there were always such a heart in them, as there seems to be sometimes; when they are under conviction of sin, or the rebukes of providence, or when they come to look death in the face: *How gracious will they be, when these pangs come upon them!* O that there were always such an heart in them. (3.) He appoints Moses to be his messenger to them, to receive the law from his mouth, and to communicate it to them, *ver. 31.* Here, the matter was settled by consent of both parties, that God should from henceforward speak to us by men like ourselves, by Moses and the prophets; the apostles and evangelists, whom if we believe not, neither would we be persuaded, tho' God should speak to us as he did to Israel at mount Sinai, or send expresses from heaven or hell.

2. Hence he infers a charge to them, to observe and do all that God had commanded them, *ver. 32, 33.* Seeing God had shewed himself so tender of them, and so willing to consider their frame, and gratify them, in what they desire, and withal so ready to make the best of them; seeing they themselves had desired to have Moses for their teacher, who was now teaching them, and seeing they had promised so solemnly, and upon so many good causes and considerations, that they would hear, and do, he charges them to *walk in all the ways that God had commanded them;* assuring them that it would be highly for their advantage to do so. The only way to be happy, is to be holy. *Say to the righteous it shall be well with them.*

CHAP. VI.

Moses in this chapter goes on with his charge to Israel, to be sure to keep up their religion in Canaan. It is much the same with chap. iv.

1. His preface is a persuasive to obedience, *ver. 1, 2, 3.*
2. He lays down the great principles of obedience. The first truth to be believed, that God is One, *ver. 4.* The first duty to be done, To love him with all our heart, *ver. 5.*
3. He prescribes the means for keeping up religion, *ver. 6—9.*
4. He cautions them against those things which would be the ruin of religion. Abuse of plenty, *ver. 10—12.* Inclination to idolatry, *ver. 14, 15.* And gives them some general precepts, *ver. 13, 16, 17, 18.*
5. He directs them what instructions to give their children, *ver. 20—25.*

1. **N**OW these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do *them* in the land whether ye go to possess it: 2. That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes, and his commandments which I command thee; thou and thy son, and thy sons son, all the days of thy life, and that thy days may be prolonged. 3. ¶ Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it, that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and hony.

Observe here, (1.) That Moses taught the people all that, and that only, which God commanded him to teach them, *ver. 1.* Thus Christ's ministers are to teach his churches *all that he has commanded*, and neither more nor less; *Matth. xxviii. 20.* (2.) That the end of their being taught was, that they might do as they were taught, *ver. 1.* might keep *God's statutes*, *ver. 2.* and observe to do them, *ver. 3.* Good instructions from parents and ministers, will but aggravate our condemnation, if we do not live up to them. (3.) That Moses carefully endeavoured to fix them for God and godliness, now they were entering upon the land of Canaan, that they might be prepared for the comforts of that land, and fortified against the snares of it; and now they were setting out in the world, might set out well. (4.) That the fear of God in the heart, will be the most powerful principle of obedience, *ver. 2.* *That thou mightest fear the Lord thy God, to keep all his statutes.* (5.) The entail of religion in a family, or country, is the best entail: it is highly desirable that not we only, but our children, and our children's children, may fear the Lord. (6.) Religion and righteousness advance and secure the prosperity of any people. Fear God, and it shall be well with thee. Those that are well taught, if they do what they are taught, shall be well fed too, as Israel in the land flowing with milk and honey, *ver. 3.*

4. Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God is one LORD.
5. And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.
6. And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart.
7. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.
8. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.
9. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.
10. And it shall be when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities which thou buildest not, 11. And houses full of all good things which thou filledst not, and wells digged which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive-trees which thou plantedst not, when thou shalt have eaten and be full; 12. Then beware lest thou forget the LORD which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.
13. Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.
14. Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you: 15. (For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth.
16. ¶ Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted him in Massah.

Here is, 1. A brief summary of religion, containing the first principles of faith and obedience, *ver. 4, 5.* These two verses the Jews reckon one of the choicest portions of scripture: they write it in their phylacteries, and think themselves not only obliged to say it at least twice every day, but very happy in being so obliged; having this saying among them, *Blessed are we, who every morning and evening say, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.* But more blessed are we, if we duly consider and improve, 1. What we are here taught to believe concerning God; That *Jehovah our God is one Jehovah.* (1.) That the God whom we serve is Jehovah, a being infinitely and eternally perfect, self-existent, and self-sufficient. (2.) That he is the one only living and true God; he only is God, and he is but one. The firm belief of this self-evident truth, would effectually arm them against all idolatry, which was introduced by that fundamental error, That there are gods many. It is past dispute, that there is one God, and there no other but he, *Mark xii. 32.* Let us therefore have no other, nor desire to have any other. Some have thought there is here a plain intimation of the Trinity of persons in the unity of the Godhead; for here is the name of God three times, and yet all declared to be One. Happy they that have this one Lord for their God, for they have but one master to please, but one benefactor to seek to. It is better to have one fountain than a thousand cisterns; one all-sufficient God, than a thousand insufficient ones.

2. What we are here taught concerning the duty which God requires of man. It is all summed up in this, as its principle, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.* He had undertook, *ver. 2.* to teach them to fear God; and, in pursuance of his undertaking, he here teaches them to love him: for the better affection we have to him, the greater veneration we shall have for him: and the child that honours his parents, no doubt loves them. Did ever any prince make a law that his subjects should love him? Yet such is the condescension of the divine grace, that this is made the first and great commandment of God's law, that we

love him, and that we perform all other parts of our duty to him from a principle of love: *My son, give me thy heart.* We must highly esteem him, be well pleased that there is such a being, well pleased in all his attributes; and relations to us; our desire must be towards him, our delight in him, our dependence upon him, and to him we must be entirely devoted. It must be a constant pleasure to us to think of him, hear from him, speak to him, and to serve him. We must love him; (1.) As the Lord, the best of beings, most excellent and amiable in himself. (2.) As our God, a God in covenant with us; our Father, and the most kind and bountiful of friends and benefactors. We are also commanded to love God *with all our heart, and soul, and might*; that is, We must love him, (1.) With a sincere love; not in word and tongue only, saying we love him, when our hearts are not with him, but inwardly, and in truth, solacing ourselves in him. (2.) With a strong love; the heart must be carried out towards him with a great ardor, and fervency of affection: Some have from hence thought, that we should avoid saying (as we commonly express ourselves) that we will do this, or that, with all our heart; for we must not do any thing with all our heart but love God; and that this phrase being here used concerning that sacred fire, it should not be unhallowed. He that is our All must have our all, and none but he. (3.) With a superlative love. We must love God above any creature whatsoever, and love nothing beside him, but what we love for him, and in subordination to him. (4.) With an intelligent love; for so it is explained, *Mark xii. 33.* To love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, we must know him, and therefore love him, as those that see good cause to love him. (5.) With an entire love; he is one, and therefore our hearts must be united in his love: and the whole stream of our affections must run towards him. O that this love of God may be shed abroad in our hearts!

2. Means are here prescribed for the maintaining and keeping up of religion in their hearts and houses, that it might not wither, and go to decay. And they are these:

1. Meditation, *ver. 6.* *These words which I command thee shall be in thy heart.* Tho' the words alone without the things will do us no good, yet we are in danger of losing the things if we neglect the words, by which ordinarily divine light and power are conveyed to the heart. God's words must be laid up in our heart, that our thoughts may be daily conversant with them, and employed about them, and thereby the whole soul may be brought to abide and act under the influence and impression of them. This immediately follows upon the law of *loving God with all our heart*, for they that do so will lay up his word in their hearts, both as an evidence and effect of that love, and as a means to preserve and increase it. He that loves God, loves his bible.

2. The religious education of children, *ver. 7.* *Thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children,* and by communicating thy knowledge thou wilt increase it. They that love the Lord God themselves, should do what they can to engage the affections of their children to him, and so to preserve the entail of religion in their families from being cut off. *Thou shalt whet them diligently upon thy children*, so some read it; frequently repeat these things to them, try all ways of instilling them into their minds, and making them pierce into their hearts. As in whetting a knife it is turned first on this side, then on that. Be careful and exact in teaching thy children; and aim, as by whetting, to sharpen them, and put an edge upon them. Teach them thy children, not only those of thine own body (say the Jews) but all those that are any way under thy care and tuition. Bishop Patrick well observes here, that Moses thought his law so very plain and easy, that every father might be able to instruct his sons in it, and every mother her daughters. Thus that good thing which is committed to us, we must carefully transmit to those that come after us, that it may be perpetuated.

3. Pious discourse. *Thou shalt talk of these things,* with due reverence and seriousness, for the benefit not only of thy children, but of thy other domesticks, thy friends and companions, as thou sittest in thy house; either at work, or at meat, or at rest, or to receive visits, and when thou walkest by the way, either for diversion, or for conversation, or in journies, when at night thou art retiring from thy family to lie down for sleep, and when in the morning thou art risen up, and returnest to thy family again. Take all occasions to discourse with those about thee of divine things; not of unrevealed mysteries, or matters of doubtful disputation, but of the plain truths and laws of God, and the things that belong to our peace. So far is it from being reckoned a diminution to the honour of sacred things, to make them the subject of our familiar discourse, that they are recommended to us to be talked of; for the more conversant we are with them, the more we shall admire them, and be affected with them, and may thereby be instrumental to communicate divine light and heat.

4. Frequent reading of the word. *They shall be as frontlets between thine eyes, and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house,* *ver. 8, 9.* It is probable, at that time there were few written copies of the whole law, only at the feast of tabernacles the people had it read to them; and therefore God appointed them, at least for the present, to write some select sentences of the law that were most weighty and comprehensive, upon their walls, or in scrolls of parchment to be worn about their wrists, and some think hence the phylacteries so much used among the Jews.

Jews took rise. Christ blames the Pharisees not for wearing them, but for affecting to have them broader than other peoples, *Matth. xxiii. 5.* But when bibles came to be common among them, there was the less occasion for this expedient. It was prudently and piously provided by the first reformers of the English church, that then when bibles were scarce, some select portions of scripture should be written on the walls and pillars of the churches, which the people might make familiar to them, in conformity to this direction here; which seems to me to have been binding in the letter of it to the Jews, as it is to us in the intent of it, which is, that we should endeavour by all means possible to make the word of God familiar to us, that we may have it ready to us upon all occasions, for our restraint from sin, and our direction and excitement to our duty. It must be as that which is *graven on the palms of our hands*, always before our eyes. See *Prov. vii. 2, 3, 4.* It is also intimated, that we must never be ashamed to own our religion, nor to own ourselves under the check and government of it. Let it be written on our gates, and let every one that goes by our door read it, That we believe Jehovah to be God alone, and believe ourselves bound to *love him with all our hearts.*

3. A caution is here given not to forget God in a day of prosperity and plenty, *ver. 10, 11, 12.* Here, 1. He raiseth their expectations of the goodness of their God; taking it for granted that he would bring them into the good land that he had promised, *ver. 10.* That they should no longer dwell in tents as shepherds and poor travellers, but should settle in great and goodly cities, should no longer wander in a barren wilderness, but should enjoy houses well furnished, and gardens well planted, *ver. 11.* and all this without any care or expence of their own, which he here lays a great stress upon, *Cities which thou buildedst not, Houses which thou filledst not, &c.* both because it made the mercy really much more valuable, that what they had came to them so cheap; and yet if they did not actually consider it, the mercy would be the less esteemed, for we are most sensible of the value of that which has cost us dear. When they came so easily by the gift, they would be apt to grow secure, and unmindful of the giver. 2. He engageth their watchfulness against the badness of their own hearts; *then beware,* when thou liest safe and soft, *lest thou forget the Lord,* *ver. 12.* Note, (1.) In a day of prosperity we are in great danger of forgetting God; our dependence upon him, our need of him, and our obligations to him. When the world smiles, we are apt to make our court to it, and expect our happiness in it, and so we forget him that is our only portion and rest. Agur prays against this temptation, *Prov. xxx. 9. Lest I be full and deny thee.* (2.) There is therefore need of great care and caution at such a time, and a strict watch over our own hearts. 'Then beware'; being warned of your danger, stand upon your guard against it. *Bind the words of God for a sign upon thy hand,* for this end, to prevent thy forgetting God. When thou art settled in Canaan, forget not thy deliverance out of Egypt: but look to the *rock out of which thou wast hewn*; when thy latter end is greatly increased, remember the smallness of thy beginnings.

4. Some special precepts and prohibitions are here given, which are of great consequence. (1.) They must upon all occasions give honour to God, *ver. 13. fear him and serve him,* (for if he be a master we must both reverence him, and do his work) *and swear by his name, i. e.* we must not upon any occasion appeal to any other but to him, as the discerners of truth, and avenger of wrong. Swear by him *only*, and not by any idol, or any other creature. *Swear by his name* in all treaties and covenants with the neighbour nations, and do not complement them so far as to swear by their gods. *Swearing by his name* is sometimes put for an open profession of his name; *Isa. xlv. 23. Every tongue shall swear* is expounded, *Rom. xiv. 11. Every tongue shall confess to God.* (2.) They must not upon any occasion give that honour to other gods, *ver. 14. Ye shall not go after other gods, i. e.* ye shall not serve or worship them, for therein they went astray, they went a whoring from the true God; who in this more than in any thing is a *jealous God*, *ver. 15.* and the learned bishop Patrick observes here out of Maimonides, that we never find either in the law or the prophets *anger* or *fury*, or *jealousy*, or *indignation*, attributed to God but upon occasion of idolatry. (3.) They must take heed of dishonouring God by *tempting him*, *ver. 16. Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God, i. e.* ye shall not in any exigence distrust the power, presence, and providence of God, nor quarrel with him, which if they indulged an evil heart of unbelief, they would take occasion to do in Canaan as well as in the wilderness: No change of condition will cure a disposition to murmur and fret: Our Saviour uses this caution as an answer to one of Satan's temptations, with application to himself, *Matth. iv. 7. Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God,* either by despairing of his power and goodness, while we keep in the way of our duty, or by presuming upon it, when we turn aside out of that way.

17. You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes which he hath commanded thee. 18. And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the LORD.

LORD: that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers; 19. To cast out all thine enemies from before thee, as the LORD hath spoken: 20. And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God hath commanded you? 21. Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaohs bond-men in Egypt, and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. 22. And the LORD shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes. 23. And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he swore unto our fathers. 24. And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day. 25. And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments, before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.

Here, 1. Moses chargeth them to keep God's commandments themselves, *ver. 17, 18, 19. You shall diligently keep God's commandments.* Note, It requires a great deal of care and pains to keep up religion in the power of it, in our hearts and lives. Negligence will ruin us; but we cannot be saved without diligence. To induce them to this, he here sheweth them, (1.) That this would be very acceptable to God, it is *right and good in the sight of the Lord*: And that is *right and good* indeed, that is so in *God's sight*. If we have any regard to the favour of our Creator as our felicity, and the law of our creation as our rule, we will be religious. (2.) That it would be very advantageous and profitable to themselves. It would secure to them the possession of the land of Canaan, prosperity there, and constant victory over those that stood in their way. In short, do well, and it shall be *well with thee.*

2. He chargeth them to instruct their children in the commands of God; not only that they might in their tender years intelligently and affectionately join in religious services, but that afterwards they might in their day keep up religion, and convey it to those that should come after them.

Now, 1. Here is a proper question, which it is supposed the children would ask, *ver. 20. What mean the testimonies and the statutes?* What is the meaning of the feasts we observe, the sacrifices we offer, and the many peculiar customs we keep up? Observe, (1.) All divine institutions have a certain meaning, and there is something great designed in them. (2.) It concerns us to know and understand the meaning of them, that we may perform a reasonable service, and may not *offer the blind for sacrifice*. (3.) It is good for children betimes to inquire into the true intent and meaning of the religious observances they are trained up in. They that are thus inquisitive in divine things, it is a good sign they are concerned about them, and a good means of their attaining to a great acquaintance with them. *Then shall we know, if thus we follow on to know.*

2. Here is a full answer put into the parents mouths to be given to this good question. Parents and teachers must give instruction to those under their charge, tho' they do not ask it; nay, tho' they have an aversion to it, much more must they be ready to answer questions, and to give instruction when it is desired; for it may be hoped, they that *ask it*, will be willing to *receive it*. Did the children ask the meaning of God's laws, let them be told, That they were to be observed, (1.) In a grateful remembrance of God's former favours to them, especially their deliverance out of Egypt, *ver. 21, 22, 23.* The children must be often told of the deplorable state their ancestors were in, when they were bondmen in Egypt, the great salvation God wrought for them in fetching them out thence, and that God in giving them these peculiar statutes, meant to perpetuate the memorial of that work of wonder, by which they were formed into a peculiar people. (2.) As the prescribed condition of his further favours, *ver. 24. The Lord commanded us all these statutes for our good.* Note, God commands us nothing but what is really for *our own good*: It is our interest as well as our duty to be religious. 1. It will be our life, *that he might preserve us alive*, which is a great favour, and more than we could expect, considering how often we have forfeited life itself. Godliness has the promise of the continuance and comfort of the life that now is, as far as it is for God's glory. 2. It will be our righteousness. Could we perfectly fulfil but that one command of loving God with all our heart, soul, and might, and could we say, we had never done otherwise, that would be so our righteousness, as to intitle us to the benefits of the covenant of innocency; had we continued in every thing that is written in the book of the law to do it, the law would have justified us. But that we cannot pretend to, therefore our sincere obedience shall be accepted through a mediator, to denominate us, as Noah was *righteous before God*, *Gen. vii. 1.*

vii. 1. Luke i. 6. and 1 John iii. 7. The Chaldee reads it, *There shall be a reward to us, if we observe to do these commandments*; for, without doubt, in keeping God's commandments there is great reward.

C H A P. VII.

Moses in this chapter exhorts Israel, (1.) In general, to keep God's commandments, ver. 11, 12. (2.) In particular, and in order to that, to keep themselves pure from all communion with idolaters.

1. *They must utterly destroy the seven devoted nations, and not spare them, or make leagues with them, ver. 1, 2, 16, 24.*
2. *They must by no means marry with the remainders of them, ver. 3, 4. (3.) They must deface and consume their altars and images, and not so much as take the silver and gold of them to their own use, ver. 5, 25, 26. To enforce this charge he shews that they were bound to do so. 1. In duty. Considering (1.) Their election to God, ver. 6. (2.) The reason of that election, ver. 7, 8. (3.) The terms they stood upon with God, ver. 9, 10.*
2. *In interest. It is here premised, (1.) In general, that if they would serve God, he would bless and prosper them, ver. 12—15. (2.) In particular, that if they would drive out the nations that they might not be a temptation to them, God would drive them out that they should not be any vexation to them, ver. 17—24.*

1. **W**HEN the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; 2. And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee: thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them, thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: 3. Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. 4. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. 5. But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. 6. For thou art a holy people, unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. 7. The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people (for ye were the fewest of all people) 8. But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 9. Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him, and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations; 10. And repayeth them that hate him, to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face. 11. Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them.

Here is, 1. A very strict caution against all friendship and fellowship with idols and idolaters. Those that are taken into communion with God must have no communication with the unfruitful works of darkness. These things they are charged about, for the preventing of this snare now before them.

1. They must shew them no mercy, ver. 1, 2. Bloody work is here appointed them, and yet it is God's work, and good work, and in its time and place needful, acceptable, and honourable.

1. God here engageth to do his part. It is spoken of as a thing taken for granted, that God would bring them into the land of promise, that he would cast out the nations before them, who were the present occupants of that land; no room was left to doubt of that. His power is irresistible, and therefore he can do it. His promise is inviolable, and therefore he will do it. Now (1.) These devoted nations are here named and numbred, ver. 1. Seven in all, and seven to one is great odds. They are specified that Israel might know the bounds and limits of their commission; hitherto their severity must come, but no further; nor must they under colour of this commission kill all that came in their way; no, here must its waves be stayed. The confining of this commission to these nations here mentioned, plainly in-

timates, that after-ages were not to draw this into a precedent; this will not serve to justify those barbarous wars which give no quarter. How agreeable soever this method might be when God himself prescribed it, to that dispensation under which such multitudes of beasts were killed and burned in sacrifice; now all sacrifices of atonement are perfected in and superseded by the great propitiation made by the blood of Christ, human blood is become perhaps more precious than it was, and those that have most power, yet must not be prodigal of it. (2.) They are here owned to be greater and mightier than Israel. They had been long rooted in this land to which Israel came strangers; they were more numerous, had men much more bulky, and more expert in war than Israel had; yet all this shall not hinder but that they shall be cast out before Israel. The strength of Israel's enemies magnifies the power of Israel's God, who will certainly be too hard for them.

2. He engageth them to do their part. Thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them, ver. 2. If God cast them out, Israel must not take them in, no not as tenants, or tributaries, or servants. No covenant of any kind must be made with them, no mercy must be shewed them. This severity was appointed, 1. By way of punishment for the wickedness they and their fathers had been guilty of. The iniquity of the Amorites was now full, and the longer it had been in the filling, the fiercer was the vengeance when it came at last. 2. By way of prevention of the mischiefs they would do to God's Israel, if they were left alive. The people of these abominations must not be mingled with the holy seed, lest they corrupt them. Better all these lives should be lost from the earth, than that religion and the true worship of God should be lost in Israel. Thus we must deal with our lusts, that war against our souls; God has delivered them into our hands by that promise, *sin shall not have dominion over you*, unless it be your own faults; let not us then make covenants with them, or shew them any mercy; but mortify and crucify them, and utterly destroy them.

2. They must make no marriages with those of them that escaped the sword, ver. 3, 4. The families of the Canaanites were ancient, and it is likely some of them were called honourable, which might be a temptation to the Israelites, especially those of them that were of least note in their tribes, to court an alliance with them to mend their blood, and the rather, because their acquaintance with the country might be serviceable to them in the improvement of it; but religion, and the fear of God, must overrule all these considerations. To intermarry with them was therefore unlawful because it was dangerous; this very thing had proved of fatal consequence to the old world, Gen. vi. 2. and thousands in the world that now is, have been undone by irreligious ungodly marriages, for there is more ground of fear in mixt marriages that the good will be perverted, than of hopes that the bad will be converted. The event proved the reasonableness of this warning, *They will turn away thy son from following me*. Solomon paid dear for his folly herein. We find a national repentance for this sin of marrying strange wives, and care taken to reform, Ezra ix. 10. and Neh. ix. 23, &c. and a New Testament caution not to be *unequally yoked with unbelievers*, 2 Cor. vi. 14. Those that in choosing yokefellows keep not at least within the bounds of a justifiable profession of religion, cannot promise themselves helps meet for them. One of the Chaldee paraphrases adds here as a reason of this command, ver. 3. *For he that marries with idolaters doth in effect marry with their idols*.

3. They must destroy all the relics of their idolatry, ver. 5. Their altars and pillars, their groves and graven images, all must be destroyed; both in a holy indignation against idolatry, and to prevent infection. This command was given before, Exod. xxiii. 24.—xxxiv. 13. A great deal of good work of this kind was done by the people in their pious zeal, 2 Chr. xxxi. 1. and by good Josiah, 2 Chr. xxxiv. 3, 7. and with this may be compared the burning of the conjuring books, Acts xix. 19.

2. Here are very good reasons to enforce this caution. 1. The choice God had made of this people for his own, ver. 6. There was such a covenant and communion established between God and Israel, as was not between him, and any other people in the world. Shall they by their idolatries dishonour him who had thus honoured them? Shall they slight him, who had thus testified his kindness for them? Shall they put themselves upon the level with other people, when God had thus dignified and advanced them above all people? Had God taken them to be a special people to him, and no other but them, and will not they take God to be a special God to them, and no other but him?

2. The freeness of that grace, which made this choice. (1.) There was nothing in them to recommend or intitle them to this favour. *In the multitude of the people is the king's honour*, Prov. xiv. 28. But their number was inconsiderable; they were only seventy souls when they went down into Egypt, and tho' greatly increased there, yet there were many other nations more numerous; ye were the fewest of all people, ver. 7. The author of the Jerusalem Targum passes too great a complement upon his nation, in his reading this, *Ye were humble in spirit, and meek above all people*; quite contrary, They were rather stiff-necked, and ill-natured above all people. (2.) God fetched the reason of it purely from himself, ver. 8. (1.) He loved you, because he would

would love you. Even so, Father, because it seemed good in thine eyes. All that God loves, he loves freely, *Hos.* xiv. 4. Those that perish, perish by their own merits, but all that are saved, are saved by prerogative. (2.) He has done his work because he would keep his word. He has brought you out of Egypt in pursuance of the oath sworn to your fathers. Nothing in them, or done by them, did or could make God a debtor to them, but he had made himself a debtor to his own promise, which he would perform notwithstanding their unworthiness.

perform notwithstandings these and other things.

3. The tenor of the covenant into which they were taken ; it was in short this, That as they were to God, so God would be to them. They should certainly find him, (1.) *Kind to his friends*, ver. 9. The Lord thy God is not like the gods of the nations, the creatures of fancy, subjects fit enough for loose poetry, but no proper objects of serious devotion ; no, he is God, God indeed, God alone, the faithful God, able and ready not only to fulfil his own promises, but to answer all the just expectations of his worshippers, and he will certainly keep covenant and mercy, *i. e.* shew mercy according to covenant, to *them that love him, and keep his commandments*. And in vain do we pretend to love him, if we do not make conscience of his commandments ; and this, (as is here added for the explication of the promise in the second commandment) not only to thousands of persons, but to thousands of generations. So inexhaustible is the fountain, so constant the streams. (2.) Just to his enemies, he *repayeth them that hate him*, ver. 10. Note, 1. Wilful sinners are haters of God ; for the carnal mind is enmity against him. Idolaters are so in a special manner, for they are in league with his rivals. 2. Those that hate God cannot hurt him, but certainly ruin themselves. He will repay them to their face ; in defiance of them, and all their impotent malice. His arrows are said to be *made ready against the face of them*, Psal. xxi. 12. Or, he will bring those judgments upon them, which shall appear to themselves to be the just punishment of their idolatry. Compare *Job* xxi. 19. *He rewardeth him, and he shall know it*. Tho' vengeance seem to be slow, yet it is not slack. The wicked and sinner shall be *recompensed in the earth*, Prov. xi. 31. I cannot pass the gloss of the Jerusalem Targum upon this place, because it speaks the faith of the Jewish Church concerning a future state : *He recompenseth to them that hate him, the reward of their good works in this world, that he may destroy them in the world to come*.

12. ¶ Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep and do them; that the LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he swore unto thy fathers. 13. And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he swore unto thy fathers to give thee. 14. Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle. 15. And the LORD will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt (which thou knowest) upon thee; but will lay them upon all *them* that hate thee. 16. And thou shalt consume all the people which the LORD thy God shall deliver thee, thine eye shall have no pity upon them: neither shalt thou serve their gods, for that *will* be a snare unto thee. 17. If thou shalt say in thine heart, These nations *are* more than I, how can I dispossess them? 18. Thou shalt not be afraid of them: *but* thou shalt well remember what the LORD thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt; 19. The great temptations which thine eyes saw, and the signs, and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the stretched out arm, whereby the LORD thy God brought thee out: so shall the LORD thy God do unto all the people of whom thou art afraid. 20. Moreover, the LORD thy God will send the hornet among them, until they that are left and hide themselves from thee, be destroyed. 21. Thou shalt not be affrighted at them: for the LORD thy God *is* among you, a mighty God and terrible. 22. And the LORD thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee. 23. But the LORD thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed. 24. And he shall deliver their kings into thine hand, and thou shalt destroy their name from under heaven: there shall no man be able to stand before thee, until thou have destroyed them. 25. The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire: thou shalt not desire the silver or gold *that is on*

them, nor take *it* unto thee, lest thou be snared therein : for it *is* an abomination to the LORD thy God. 26. Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thy house, lest thou be a cursed thing like it : *but* thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it, for it *is* a cursed thing.

Here, 1. The caution against idolatry is repeated, and against communion with idolaters, *ver.* 16. Thou shalt consume the people, and not serve their gods. We are in danger of having fellowship with the works of darkness, if we take pleasure in fellowship with those that do those works. Here is also a repetition of the charge to *destroy the images*, *ver.* 25, 26. The idols which the heathen had worshipped, were an abomination to God, and therefore must be so to them: all that truly love God, hate what he hates. Observe how this is urged upon them, *thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it*: such a holy indignation as this, must we conceive against sin, that *abominable thing, which the Lord hates*. They must not retain the images, either to gratify their covetousness, *Thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them*, nor think it pity to have that destroyed. Achan paid dear for converting that to his own use which was an anathema. Nor to gratify thy curiosity; neither shalt thou bring it into thine house, to be hung up as an ornament, or preserved as a monument of antiquity: No, to the fire with it, that is the fittest place for it. Two reasons are given for this caution. *Lest thou be snared therein*, *ver.* 25. *i. e.* lest thou be drawn, ere thou art aware, to like it and love it, to fancy it, and pay respect to it; *And, lest thou be a cursed thing like it*, *ver.* 26. They that make images, are said to be like unto them, stupid, and senseless; here they are said to be in a worse sense like to them, accursed of God, and devoted to destruction. Compare these two reasons together; and observe, That whatever brings us into a snare, brings us under a curse.

2. The promise of God's favour to them, if they would be obedient, is enlarged upon with a most affecting copiousness, and fluency of expression, which speaks how much it is both God's desire, and our own interest, that we be religious. All possible assurance is here given them,

1. That if they would sincerely endeavour to do their part of the covenant, God would certainly perform his part. He shall *keep the mercy which he swears to thy fathers*, ver. 12. Let us be constant to our duty, and we cannot question the constancy of God's mercy.

2. That if they would love God, and serve him, and devote themselves and theirs to him, he would love them, and bless them, and multiply them greatly, *ver.* 13, 14. What could they desire more to make them happy? (1.) *He will love thee.* He began in love to us, *1 John* iv. 21. and if we return his love in filial duty, then, and then only, we may expect the continuance of it, *John* xiv. 21. (2.) He will bless thee with the tokens of his love, above all people. If they would distinguish themselves from their neighbours by singular services, God would dignify them above their neighbours by singular blessings. (3.) He will *multiply thee.* Increase was the ancient blessing for the peopling of the world, once and again, *Gen.* i. 28.—ix. 1. and here for the peopling of Canaan, that little world by itself. The increase both of their families, and of their stock is promised: They should neither have estates without heirs, nor heirs without estates, but should have the compleat satisfaction of having many children, and plentiful provisions, and portions for them.

3. That if they would keep themselves pure from the idolatries of Egypt, God would keep them clear from the *diseases of Egypt*, ver. 15. It seems to refer not only to those plagues of Egypt, by the force of which they were delivered, but to some other epidemical country disease, as we call it, which they remembered the prevalency of among the Egyptians, and by which God had chastised them for their national sins. Diseases are God's servants, go where he sends them, and do what he bids them: It is therefore good for the health of our bodies, to mortify the sin of our souls.

4. That if they would cut off the devoted nations, they should cut them off, and none should be able to stand before them. Their duty in this matter, would itself be their advantage. *Thou shalt consume all the people which the Lord thy God shall deliver thee*, that is the precept, *ver. 16.* And then *the Lord thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them*, that is the promise, *ver. 23.* Thus we are commanded not to let sin reign, not to indulge ourselves in it, or give countenance to it, but to hate it, and strive against it; and then God has promised, that *sin shall not have dominion over us*, *Rom. vi. 12, 14.* But we shall be more than conquerors over it.

The difficulty and doubtfulness of the conquest of Canaan, having been a stone of stumbling to their fathers, he here animates them against those things which were most likely to discourage them, bidding them not to be *afraid of them*, ver. 18. And again, *ver. 21.*

1. Let them not be disheartened by the number and strength of their enemies. *Say not, they are more than I, how can I dispossess them?* ver. 17. We are apt to think that the most numerous.

merous, must needs be victorious: But to fortify them against this temptation, he minds them of the destruction of Pharaoh, and all the power of Egypt, *ver. 18, 19.* They had seen the great temptations, or miracles (so the Chaldee reads it) the signs and wonders, wherewith God had brought them out of Egypt, in order to his bringing of them into Canaan, and from thence might easily infer, both that God could dispossess the Canaanites, who tho' formidable enough, had not such advantages against Israel, as the Egyptians had: He that had done the greater, could do the lesser: and that he would dispossess them, otherwise his bringing Israel out of Egypt had been no kindness to them. He that begun, would finish. Thou shalt therefore *well remember* this, *ver. 18.* The word and works of God are then well remembered, when they are improved as helps to our faith and obedience. That is well laid up, which is ready to us when we have occasion to use it.

2. Let them not be disheartened by the weakness and deficiency of their own forces; for God would send them in auxiliary troops of hornets, or wasps, as some read it, *ver. 20.* probably, bigger than ordinary, which should so terrify and molest their enemies, and perhaps be the death of many of them, that their most numerous armies would become an easy prey to Israel. God plagued the Egyptians with flies, but the Canaanites with hornets. Those who take not warning by lesser judgments on others, may expect greater on themselves. But their great encouragement was, that they had God among them, a *mighty God, and terrible*, *ver. 21.* And if God be for us, if God be with us, we need not fear the power of any creature against us.

3. Let them not be disheartened by the slow progress of their arms, nor think the Canaanites would never be subdued, if they were not expelled the first year; no, they must be *put out by little and little*, and not *all at once*, *ver. 22.* Note, We must not think that because the deliverance of the church, and the destruction of its enemies is not effected presently, therefore it will never be effected; God will do his own work, in his own method and time; and we may be sure that is always the best. Thus corruption is driven out of the hearts of believers, *by little and little.* The work of sanctification is carried on gradually; but that judgment will at length be brought forth into a complete victory. The reason here given (as before *Exod. xxiii. 29, 30.*) is, *Left the beast of the field increase upon thee.* The earth God has given to the children of men; and therefore there shall rather be a remainder of Canaanites to keep possession till Israel become numerous enough to replenish it, than that it should be a habitation of dragons, and a court for *the wild beasts of the desert*, *Isa. xxxiv. 13.* Yet God could have prevented this mischief from the beasts, *Lev. xxvi. 6.* But pride and security, and other sins that are the common effects of a settled prosperity, were the enemies more dangerous than the beasts of the field, that would be apt to increase upon them. See *Judges iii. 1, 4.*

C H A P. VIII.

Moses had charged parents in teaching their children, to what the word of God upon them, chap. vi. 7. by frequent repetition of the same things, over and over again; and here he himself takes the same method in instructing the Israelites, as his children; frequently inculcating the same precepts and cautions, with the same motives, or arguments to enforce them; that what they heard so oft might abide with them. In this chapter Moses gives them, 1. General exhortations to obedience, *ver. 1, 6.* 2. A review of the great things God had done for them in the wilderness, as a good argument for obedience, *ver. 2—5. and ver. 15, 16.* 3. A prospect of the good land into which God would now bring them, *ver. 7, 8, 9.* 4. A necessary caution against the temptations of a prosperous condition, *ver. 10—14. and 17, 18.* 5. A fair warning of the fatal consequences of apostasy from God, *ver. 19, 20.*

1. **A**LL the commandments which I command thee this day, shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers. 2. And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what *was* in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments, or no. 3. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna (which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know) that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live. 4. Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell these forty years. 5. Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee. 6. Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him. 7. For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good

land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains, and depths that spring out of valleys and hills, 8. A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of oyl-olive, and hony, 9. A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any *thing* in it, a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass.

The charge here given them, is the same as before, to keep, and do, all God's commandments: Their obedience must be, 1. careful, *observe to do.* (2.) Universal, to *do all the commandments*, *ver. 1.* And (3.) From a good principle, with a regard to God, as the Lord, and their God, and particularly with a holy fear of him, *ver. 6.* from a reverence of his majesty, a submission to his authority, and a dread of his wrath.

To engage them to this obedience, besides the great advantages of it, which he sets before them, *ver. 1.* That they should *live and multiply*, and all should be well with them; he directs them,

1. To look back upon the wilderness thro' which God had now brought them, *ver. 2.* *Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness.* Now they were come to age, and were entering upon their inheritance, they must be minded of the discipline they had been under during their minority, and the method God had taken to train them up for himself. The wilderness was the school in which they had been for forty years boarded and taught, under tutors and governors; and now was a time to bring all this to remembrance. The occurrences of these last forty years were, (1.) Very memorable, and well worthy to be remembered. (2.) Very useful and profitable to be remembered, as yielding a complication of arguments for obedience. And (3.) They were recorded on purpose that they might be remembered. As the feast of the passover was a memorial of their deliverance out of Egypt, so the feast of tabernacles was of their passage thro' the wilderness. Note, It is very good for us to remember all the ways both of God's providence and grace, by which he hath led us hitherto through this wilderness, that we may be prevailed with, cheerfully to serve him and trust in him. Here let us set up our Ebenezer.

1. They must remember the straits they were sometimes brought into; (1.) For the mortifying of their pride, it was to humble them; that they might not be exalted above measure with the abundance of miracles that were wrought in their favours, and that they might not be secure, and confident of being in Canaan presently. (2.) For the manifesting of their perverseness, to prove them, that they and others might know (for God himself perfectly knew it before) all that was in their heart, and might see that God chose them, not for any thing in them that might recommend them to his favour, for their whole carriage was disobliging. Many commandments God gave them which there had been no occasion for, if they had not been led thro' the wilderness, as those relating to the manna, (*Exod. xvi. 28.*) and God thereby tried them, as our first parents were tried by the trees of the garden, whether they would keep God's commandments or no. Or, God thereby proved them whether they would trust his promises, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations, and in dependence on his promises obey his precepts.

2. They must remember the supplies which were always granted them. God himself took particular care of their food, raiment, and health; and what would they have more?

(1.) They had manna for food, *ver. 3.* *God suffered them to hunger, and then fed them with manna*, that the extremity of their want might make their supply the more acceptable, and God's goodness to them therein the more remarkable. God often brings his people low, that he may have the honour of helping them. And thus the manna of heavenly comforts is given to them that *hunger and thirst after righteousness*, *Matt. v. 6.* *To the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.* It is said of the manna, that it was a sort of food, which neither *they nor their fathers knew.* And again, *ver. 16.* if they knew there was such a thing that fell sometimes with the dew in those countries, as some think they did; yet it was never known to fall in such vast quantities, so constantly, and at all seasons of the year, so long, and only about a certain place: These things were altogether miraculous, and without precedent, *The Lord created a new thing*, for their supply. And hereby he taught them, *That man liveth not by bread alone*; tho' God hath appointed bread for the strengthening of man's heart, and that is ordinarily made the staff of life, yet God can, when he pleases, command support and nourishment without it, and make something else very unlikely to answer the intention as well. We might live upon air, if it were sanctified for that use by *the word of God*; for the means God ordinarily useth he is not tied to, but can perform his kind purposes to his people without them. Our Saviour quotes this scripture in answer to that temptation of Satan, *Command that these stones be made bread.* What needs that? saith Christ, my heavenly Father can keep me alive without bread, *Matt. iv. 3, 4.* Let none of God's children distrust their Father, nor take any sinful indirect course for the supply of their own necessities, some way or other God will provide for them in the way of duty, and honest diligence, and *verily they shall be fed.* It may be applied spiritually; the word of God, as it is the revelation of God's will and grace, duly received, and enter-

tained by faith is the food of the soul; the life which is supported by that is the life of the man, and not only that life which is supported by bread. The manna typified Christ, *the bread of life*. He is *the word of God*; by him we live; the Lord evermore give us that bread which endures to eternal life, and let us not be put off with the *meat that perisheth*!

2. The same clothes served them from Egypt to Canaan; at least the generality of them. Tho' they had not change of raiment, yet it was always new, and waxed not old upon them, *ver. 4.* This was a standing miracle, and the greater, if, as the Jews say, they grew with them, so as to be always fit for them. But it is plain they brought out of Egypt bundles of clothes on their shoulders, *Exod. xii. 34.* which they might barter with each other as there was occasion, and those, with what they wore, sufficed till they came into a country where they could furnish themselves with new clothes.

Now by the method God took of providing food and raiment for them, (1.) He humbled them. It was a mortification to them to be tied for forty years together to the same meat, without any varieties, and to the same clothes, in the same fashion. Thus he taught them that the good things he designed for them were figures of better things; and that the happiness of man consists not in being clothed in *purple or fine linen*, and in *feeling sumptuously every day*, but by being taken into covenant and communion with God, and in *learning his righteous judgments*. God's law which was given to Israel in the wilderness, must be to them instead of food and raiment. (2.) He proved them, whether they could trust him to provide for them, then when means and second causes failed. Thus he taught them to live in a dependence upon providence, and not to perplex themselves with care *what they should eat and drink*; and *wherewithal they should be clothed*. Christ would have his disciples learn the same lesson, *Matt. vi. 25.* and took a like method to teach it them, when he *sent them out without purse or scrip*, and yet took care that they *lacked nothing*, *Luke xxii. 35.* (3.) God took care of *their health and ease*. Tho' they travelled on foot in a dry country, the way rough and untrodden, yet their *foot swelled not*; God preserved them from taking hurt by the inconveniencies of their journey; and mercies of that kind we ought to acknowledge. Note, Those that follow God's conduct are not only safe, but easy. Our feet swell not, while we keep in the way of duty; it is the *way of transgression that is hard*, *Prov. xiii. 15.* God has promised to *keep the feet of his saints*, *1 Sam. ii. 9.*

3. They must also remember the rebukes they had been under, *ver. 5.* During these years of their education they had been kept under a strict discipline, and not without need. *As a man chasteneth his son*, for his good, and because he loves him, *so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee*. God is a loving tender father to all his children, yet when there is occasion they shall feel the smart of the rod. Israel did so; they were chastened that they might not be condemned; chastened with the rod of men. Not as a man wounds and slays his enemies whose destruction he aims at, but as a man chasteneth his son whose happiness and welfare he designs. So did their God chasten them; he chastened and taught them, *Psal. xciv. 12.* This they must *consider in their heart*, i. e. They must own it from their own experience; that God had corrected them with a fatherly love, for which they must return to him a filial reverence and compliance. Because God has chastened thee as a father, *Therefore, ver. 6. thou shalt keep his commandments*. This use we should make of all our afflictions; by them let us be engaged and quickened to our duty. Thus they are directed to look back upon the wilderness.

2. He directs them to look forward to Canaan, into which God was now bringing them. Look which way we will, both our reviews and our prospects will furnish us with arguments for obedience. The land which they were now going to take possession of, is here described to be a very good land, *ver. 7, 8, 9.* There was every thing in it that was desirable. (1.) It was *well watered like Eden, the garden of the Lord*. It was a *land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths*, which contributed to the fruitfulness of the soil. Perhaps there was more plenty of water there now than had been in Abraham's time, the Canaanites having found and digged wells; so that Israel reaped the fruit of their industry as well as of God's bounty. (2.) The ground produced great plenty of all good things, not only for the necessary support, but for the convenience and comfort of human life. In their father's land they had bread enough; it was corn land, a land of wheat and barley, where, with the common care and labour of the husbandman, they might eat bread without scarceness. It was a fruitful land that was never turned into barrenness, but for the iniquity of them that dwelt therein. They had not only water enough to quench their thirst, but vines, the fruit whereof was ordained to make glad the heart. And were they desirous of dainties; they needed not send to far countries for them, when their own was so well stocked with fig-trees and pomegranates, olives of the best kind, and honey, or date-trees, as some think it should be read. (3.) Even the bowels of its earth were very rich, tho' it should seem that *silver and gold they had none*; of these the princes of Sheba should bring presents, *Psal. lxxii. 15.* yet they had plenty of those more serviceable metals, iron and brass. Iron-stone, and mines of brass were found in their hills. See *Job xxviii. 2.*

No. xiii.

Now these things are mentioned (1.) To shew the great difference between that wilderness thro' which God had led them, and the good land into which he was bringing them. Note, Those that bear the inconveniencies of an afflicted state with patience and submission, are humbled by them, and prove well under them; are best prepared for better circumstances. (2.) To shew what obligations they lay under to keep God's commandments, both in gratitude for his favour to them, and in interest, that the favours might be continued. The only way to keep possession of this good land would be to keep in the way of their duty. (3.) To shew what a figure it was of good things to come. Whatever others saw, it is probable Moses in it saw a type of the better country: The gospel church is the New Testament Canaan, watered with the Spirit in his gifts and graces, planted with the trees of righteousness, bearing the fruits of righteousness. Heaven is the good land, in which there is nothing wanting, and where there is a fulness of joy.

10. When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God, for the good land which he hath given thee. 11. Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: 12. Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; 13. And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied: 14. Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God (which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; 15. Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; 16. Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end) 17. And thou say in thine heart, My power, and the might of my hand, hath gotten me this wealth. 18. But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day. 19. And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day, that ye shall surely perish. 20. As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish: because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God.

Moses having mentioned the great plenty they would find in the land of Canaan, finds it necessary to caution them against the abuse of that plenty, which was a sin they would be the more prone to now they came into that vineyard of the Lord, immediately out of a barren desert.

1. He directs them to the duty of a prosperous condition, *ver. 10.* They are allowed to eat, even to fulness; not to surfeiting or excess: But let them always remember their benefactor, the founder of their feast, and never fail to give thanks after meat, *Then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God.* (1.) They must take heed of eating or drinking so much as to indispose themselves for this duty of blessing God, but rather serve God therein with so much the more cheerfulness and enlargement. (2.) They must not have any fellowship with those that, when they had eaten and were full, blessed false gods, as the Israelites themselves had done in their worship of the golden calf, *Exod. xxxii. 6.* (3.) Whatever they had the comfort of, God must have the glory of. As our Saviour has taught us to bless before we eat, *Matth. xiv. 19, 20.* So we are here taught to bless after meat. That is our Hosannah, God bless; this is our Hallelujah, blessed be God. *In every thing we must give thanks.* From this law the religious Jews took up a laudable usage of blessing God, not only at their solemn meals, but upon other occasions; if they drank of a cup of wine, they lifted up their hands, and said, *Blessed be he that created the fruit of the vine to make glad the heart*: If they but smell at a flower, they said, *Blessed be he that made this flower sweet.* (4.) When they gave thanks for the fruits of the land, they must give thanks for the good land itself, which was given them by promise. From all our comfortable enjoyments, we must take occasion to thank God for our comfortable settlements; and I know not but we of this nation, have as much reason as they had to give thanks for a good land.

2. He arms them against the temptations of a prosperous condition, and charges them to stand upon their guard against them: when thou art settled in goodly houses of thy own building, *ver. 12.* (for tho' God gave them houses which they builded not, *chap. vi. 10.* those would not serve them, they must have larger and finer) and when thou art grown rich in cattle, in silver and in gold, *ver. 13.* as Abraham, *Gen. xiii. 2.* when *all thou hast is multiplied.*

1. Then take heed of pride. Beware *lest then thy heart be lifted up*, ver. 14. when the estate riseth, the mind is apt to rise with it, in self-conceit, self-complacency, and self-confidence. Let us therefore strive to keep the spirit low in a high condition; humility is both the ease and the ornament of prosperity. Take heed of saying so much as in thy heart that proud word, *My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth*, ver. 17. Note, We must never take the praise of our prosperity to ourselves, nor attribute it to our ingenuity or industry; for bread is not always *to the wise*, nor riches *to men of understanding*, Eccl. ix. 11. It is spiritual idolatry, thus *to sacrifice to our own net*, Hab. i. 16.

2. Then take heed of forgetting God. This follows upon the *lifting up of the heart*; for it is *through the pride of the countenance*, that the *wicked seeks not after God*, Psal. x. 4. Those that admire themselves, despise God.

(1.) Forget not thy duty to God, ver. 11. We forget God, if we keep not his commandments; we forget his authority over us, and our obligations to him, and expectations from him, if we be not obedient to his laws. When men grow rich, they are tempted to think religion a needless thing; they are happy without it, think it a thing below them, and too hard upon them; their dignity forbids them to stoop, and their liberty forbids them to serve. But we are basely ungrateful, if the better God is to us, the worse we are to him.

2. Forget not God's former dealings with thee. Thy deliverance out of Egypt, ver. 14. The provision he made for thee in the wilderness, that great and terrible wilderness; they must never forget the impressions which the horror of that wilderness made upon them, see Jer. ii. 6. where it is called the very *shadow of death*. There God preserved them from being destroyed by the fiery serpents and scorpions, tho' sometimes he made use of them for their correction: there he kept them from perishing for want of water, following them with water out of a rock of flint, ver. 15. Out of which (saith bishop Patrick) one would rather have expected fire than water. There he fed them with manna, of which before, ver. 3. taking care to keep them alive, that he might *do them good at their latter end*, ver. 16. Note, God reserves the best till the last for his Israel. However he may seem to deal hardly with them by the way, he will not fail to do them good at their latter end.

(3.) Forget not God's hand in thy present prosperity, ver. 18. Remember, it is he that giveth thee wealth; for he *giveth thee power to get wealth*. See here how God's giving, and our getting are reconciled, and apply it to spiritual wealth. It is our duty to get wisdom, and, above all our gettings, to get understanding; and yet it is God's grace that gives wisdom, and when we have got it, we must not say, it was the might of our hand that got it, but must own, it was God that gave us power to get it, and therefore to him we must give the praise, and consecrate the use of it. The *blessing of the Lord*, on the *hand of the diligent*, makes rich both for this world, and for the other. He *giveth thee power to get wealth*, not so much to gratify thee, and make thee easy, as that he may establish his covenant. All God's gifts are in pursuance of his promises.

Lastly, He repeats the fair warning he had oft given them of the fatal consequences of their apostasy from God, ver. 19, 20. Observe (1.) How he describes the sin; it is forgetting God, and then worshipping other gods. What wickedness will not they fall into, that keep thoughts of God out of their minds? And when once the affections are displaced from God, they will soon be misplaced upon lying vanities. (2.) How he denounces wrath and ruin against them for it; if you do so, *ye shall surely perish*, and the power and might of your hands, you are so proud of, cannot help you. Nay, You shall perish, as the nations that are driven out before you. God will make no more account of you, notwithstanding his covenant with you, and your relation to him, than he doth of them, if you will not be obedient and faithful to him. They that follow others in sin, will certainly follow them to destruction. If we do as sinners do, we must expect to fare as sinners fare.

C H A P. IX.

The design of Moses in this chapter, is, to convince the people of Israel of their utter unworthiness to receive from God those great favours that were now to be conferred upon them; writing this, as it were in capital letters, at the head of their charter. Not for your sake, be it known to you, Ezek. xxxvi. 32. 1. He assures them of victory over their enemies, ver. 1—3. 2. He cautions them not to attribute their successes to their own merit, but to God's justice, which was engaged against their enemies, and his faithfulness, which was engaged to their fathers, ver. 4—6. 3. To make it evident, that they had no reason to boast of their own righteousness, he rips up their faults, shows Israel their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins. In general, they had been all along a provoking people, ver. 7—24. In particular, 1. In the matter of the golden calf, the story of which, he largely relates, ver. 8—21. 2. He mentions some other instances of their rebellion, ver. 22, 23. And, 3. Returns, at ver. 25. to speak of the intercession he had made for them at Horeb, to prevent their being ruined for the golden calf.

1. **H**ear, O Israel: Thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thy self, cities great and fenced up to heaven, 2. A people great and tall, the children of the Anakims, whom thou knowest, and of whom thou hast heard say, Who can stand before the children of Anak! 3. Understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God is he which goeth over before thee as a consuming fire: he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the LORD hath said unto thee. 4. Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the LORD thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the LORD hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee. 5. Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 6. Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it, for thy righteousness, for thou art a stiff-necked people.

The call to attention, ver. 1. *Hear, O Israel*, intimates, this was a new discourse, delivered at some distance of time after the former, probably, the next sabbath-day.

1. He represents to them the formidable strength of the enemies, which they were now to encounter, ver. 1. The nations they were to dispossess, were mightier than themselves, not a rude and undisciplined rout, like the natives of America, that were easily made a prey of. But should they besiege them, they would find their cities well fortified, according as the art of fortification then was: should they engage them in the field, they would find the people great and tall, of whom common fame had reported, that there was no standing before them, ver. 2. This representation, is much the same with that which the evil spies had made, Numb. xiii. 28, 33. but made with a very different intention: that was designed to drive them from God, and to discourage their hope in him; this to drive them to God, and engage their hope in him; since no power less than that which is almighty could secure and succeed them.

2. He assures them of victory, by the presence of God with them, notwithstanding the strength of the enemy, ver. 3. Understand therefore what thou must trust to for success, and which way thou must look; it is the Lord thy God that goes before thee, not only as thy captain, or commander in chief to give direction, but as a consuming fire, to do execution among them. Observe, He shall destroy them, and then thou shalt drive them out. Thou canst not drive them out, unless he destroy them, and bring them down. But he will not destroy them, and bring them down, unless thou set thyself in good earnest to drive them out. We must do our endeavour in dependence upon God's grace, and we shall have that grace, if we do our endeavour.

3. He cautions them not to entertain the least thought of their own righteousness, as if that had procured them this favour at God's hands. Say not, for my righteousness, either with regard to my good character, or in recompence for any good service; *the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land*, ver. 4. never think it is for thy righteousness, or the uprightness of thy heart, that it is for and in consideration either of thy good conversation, or of thy good disposition, ver. 5. And again, ver. 6. it is insisted on, because it is hard to bring people from a conceit of their own merit, and yet very necessary that it be done, understand, know it, and believe it, and consider it, that *the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land for thy righteousness*. Hadst thou been to come to it upon that condition, thou hadst been for ever shut out of it, for thou art a stiff-necked people. Note, Our gaining possession of the heavenly Canaan, as it must be attributed to God's power, and not to our own might, so it must be ascribed to God's grace, and not to our own merit: in Christ we have both *righteousness and strength*, in him therefore we must glory, and not in ourselves, or any sufficiency of our own.

4. He intimates to them the true reasons why God would take this good land out of the hands of the Canaanites, and settle it upon Israel, and they are borrowed from his own honour, not from Israel's deserts. 1. He will be honoured in the destruction of idolaters; they are justly looked upon as haters of him, and therefore he will visit their iniquity upon them. It is for the *wickedness of these nations* that God drives them out, ver. 4. and again, ver. 5. All those whom God rejects, are rejected for their own wickedness; but none of those whom he accepts are accepted for their own righteousness. 2. He will be honoured in the performance of his promise to those that are in covenant with him: God sware to the patriarchs who loved him, and left all to follow him, that he would give this land to their seed; and there-fore

fore he would keep that promised mercy for thousands of them that loved him and kept his commandments; he would not suffer his promise to fail. It was for their fathers sakes that they were beloved, *Rom. xi. 28.* Thus boasting is for ever excluded. See *Eph. i. 9, 11.*

7. Remember, and forget not how thou provokedst the LORD thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the LORD. 8. Also in Horeb ye provoked the LORD to wrath, so that the LORD was angry with you, to have destroyed you. 9. When I was gone up into the mount, to receive the tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water: 10. And the LORD delivered unto me two tables of stone written with the finger of God, and on them was written according to all the words which the LORD spake with you in the mount, out of the midst of fire, in the day of the assembly. 11. And it came to pass at the end of forty days and forty nights, that the LORD gave me the two tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant. 12. And the LORD said unto me, Arise, get thee down quickly from hence; for thy people which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: they are quickly turned aside out of the way which I commanded them, they have made them a molten image. 13. Furthermore, the LORD spake unto me, saying, I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. 14. Let me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven: and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they. 15. So I turned and came down from the mount, and the mount burned with fire: and the two tables of the covenant were in my two hands. 16. And I looked, and behold, ye had sinned against the LORD your God, and had made you a molten calf: ye had turned aside quickly out of the way which the LORD had commanded you. 17. And I took the two tables, and cast them out of my two hands, and brake them before your eyes. 18. And I fell down before the LORD as at the first, forty days and forty nights; I did neither eat bread nor drink water, because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. 19. (For I was afraid of the anger, and hot displeasure wherewith the LORD was wroth against you to destroy you) But the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also. 20. And the LORD was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him: and I prayed for Aaron also the same time. 21. And I took your sin, the calf which ye had made, and burnt it with fire, and stamped it, and ground it very small, even until it was as small as dust: and I cast the dust thereof into the brook that descended out of the mount. 22. And at Taberah, and at Massah, and at Kibroth-hattaavah, ye provoked the LORD to wrath. 23. Likewise when the LORD sent you from Kadesh-barnea, saying, Go up and possess the land which I have given you; then you rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God, and ye believed him not, nor hearkened to his voice. 24. You have been rebellious against the LORD, from the day that I knew you. 25. Thus I fell down before the LORD forty days and forty nights, as I fell down at the first; because the LORD had said he would destroy you. 26. I prayed therefore unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, destroy not thy people, and thine inheritance which thou hast redeemed through thy greatness, which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand. 27. Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin: 28. Lest the land whence thou broughtest us out, say, Because the LORD was not able to bring them into the land which he promised them, and because he hated them, he hath brought them out to slay them in the wilderness. 29. Yet they are thy people and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest out by thy mighty power, and by thy stretched out arm.

That they might have no pretence to think that God brought them to Canaan for their righteousness, he here shews them what

a miracle of mercy it was, that they had not, long ere this, been destroyed in the wilderness, remember and forget not how thou provokedst the lord thy God, ver. 7. so far from purchasing his favour, that thou hast many a time laid thy self open to his displeasure. Their fathers provocations are here charged upon them; for if God had dealt with their fathers according to their deserts, this generation had never been, much less had they entered Canaan. We are apt to forget our provocations, especially when the smart of the rod is over, and have need to be often put in mind of them, that we may never entertain any conceit of our own righteousness. St Paul argues from the guilt all mankind is under, to prove, that we cannot be justified before God by our own works, *Rom. iii. 19, 20.* If our works condemn us, they will not justify us.

1. They had been a provoking people ever since they came out of Egypt, ver. 7. Forty years long, from first to last, were God and Moses grieved with them. It is a very sad character Moses now at parting leaves of them, ver. 24. You have been rebellious from the day I knew you. No sooner were they formed into a people, but there was faction formed among them, which upon all occasions made head against God and his government. Tho' the Mosaic history records little more than the occurrences of the first and last year of the forty, yet it seems by this general account, that the rest of the years were not much better, but one continued provocation.

2. Even in Horeb they made a calf and worshipped it, ver. 8 &c. That was a sin so heinous, and by several aggravations made so exceeding sinful, that they deserved upon all occasions to be upbraided with it. It was done in the very place where the law was given, by which they were expressly forbidden to worship God by images; and while the mountain was yet burning before their eyes, and Moses was gone up to fetch them the law in writing. They turned aside quickly, ver. 16.

3. God was very angry with them for their sin. Let them not think that God overlooked what they did amiss, and gave them Canaan for what was good among them: No, God had determined to destroy them, ver. 8. could easily have done it, and have been no loser by it; bespoke Moses to let him alone that he might do it, ver. 13, 14. By this it appeared how heinous their sin was, for God is never angry with any, above what there is cause for, as men often are. Moses himself, tho' a friend and favourite, trembled at the revelation of God's wrath from heaven, against their ungodliness and unrighteousness, ver. 19. I was afraid of the anger of the Lord; afraid perhaps not for them only, but for himself, *Psal. cxix. 120.*

4. They had by their sin broken covenant with God, and forfeited all the privileges of the covenant which Moses signified to them by breaking the tables, ver. 17. A bill of divorce was given them, and from thence forward they might justly have been abandoned for ever; so that their mouth was certainly stopped from pleading any righteousness of their own. God had in effect disowned them, when he said to Moses, ver. 12. They are thy people, they are none of mine, nor shall they be dealt with as mine.

5. Aaron himself fell under God's displeasure for it, tho' he was the faint of the lord, and was only brought by surprize, or terror, to be confederate with them in the sin, ver. 20. The lord was very angry with Aaron. No man's place or character can shelter him from the wrath of God, if we have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Aaron that should have made atonement for them, if the iniquity would have been purged away by sacrifice and offering, did himself fall under the wrath of God: so little did they consider what they did, when they drew him in.

6. It was with great difficulty, and very long attendance, that Moses himself prevailed to turn away the wrath of God, and prevent their utter ruin. He fasted and prayed full forty days and forty nights before he could obtain their pardon, ver. 18. And some think, twice forty days, ver. 25. Because it is said, as I fell down before, whereas his errand in the first forty, was not of that nature. Others think, it was but one forty, tho' twice mentioned, and again, chap. x. 10. But that was enough to make them sensible how great God's displeasure was against them, and what a narrow turn they had for their lives. And by this appears the greatness of God's anger against all mankind, that no less a person than his Son, and no less a price than his own blood, would serve to turn it away. Moses here tells them the substance of his intercession for them. He was obliged to own their stubbornness, and their wickedness, and their sin, ver. 27. Their character was bad indeed, when he that appeared an advocate for them, could not give them a good word; and had nothing else to say in their behalf, but that God had done great things for them, which really did but aggravate their crime, ver. 26. that they were the posterity of good ancestors, ver. 27. which might also have been turned upon him, as making the matter worse and not better: and that the Egyptians would reproach God, if he should destroy them, as unable to perfect what he had wrought for them, ver. 28. A plea which might easily enough have been answered: no matter what the Egyptians say, while the heavens declare God's righteousness. So that the saving of them from ruin at that time, was owing purely to the mercy of God, and the importunity

importunity of Moses, and not to any merit of theirs, that could be offered so much as in mitigation of their offence.

7. To affect them the more with the destruction they were then at the brink of, he describes the destruction of the calf they had made, very particularly, *ver. 21*. He calls it their sin; perhaps, not only because it had been the matter of their sin, but because the destroying of it, was intended for a testimony against their sin; and an indication to them, what the sinners themselves did deserve. They that made it, were like unto it, and had had no wrong done them, if they had been thus stamped to dust and consumed, and scattered, and no remains of them left. It was infinite mercy that accepted the destruction of the idol, instead of the destruction of the idolaters.

8. Even after this fair escape that they had, in many other instances, they provoked the Lord, again and again. He needed only to name the places, for they carried the memorials either of the sin or of the punishment in their names, *ver. 22*. at Taberah, burning, where God set fire to them for their murmuring: at Massah, the temptation, where they challenged almighty power to help them: and at Kibroth-hattaavah, the graves of lusts, where the dainties they coveted, were their poison. And after these, their unbelief and distrust at Kadesh-barnea, which he had already told them of, *chap. i.* and here mentions again, *ver. 23*. had certainly compleated their ruin, if they had been dealt with according to their own merits.

Now let them lay all this together, and it will appear, that whatever favour God should hereafter shew them, in subduing their enemies, and putting them in possession of the land of Canaan, it was not for their righteousness. It is good for us often to remember against ourselves, with sorrow and shame, our former sins, and to review the records conscience keeps of them, that we may see how much we are indebted to free grace, and may humbly own, that we never merited at God's hand any thing but wrath and the curse.

CHAP. X.

Moses having in the foregoing chapter minded them of their own sin, as a reason why they should not depend upon their own righteousness; in this chapter sets before them God's great mercy to them, notwithstanding their provocations, as a reason why they should be more obedient for the future. 1. He mentions divers tokens of God's favour and reconciliation to them, never to be forgotten. (1.) The renewing of the tables of the covenant, ver. 1—5. (2.) Giving orders for their progress towards Canaan, ver. 6, 7. (3.) Chusing the tribe of Levi for his own, ver. 8, 9. And continuing the priesthood after the death of Aaron, ver. 6. (4.) Owning and accepting the intercession of Moses for them, ver. 10, 11. 2. From hence he infers what obligations they lay under to fear, and love, and serve God, which he presses upon them with many motives, ver. 12—22.

1. **A**T that time the LORD said unto me, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto me into the mount, and make thee an ark of wood. 2. And I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest, and thou shalt put them in the ark. 3. And I made an ark of shittim-wood, and hewed two tables of stone like unto the first, and went up into the mount, having the two tables in mine hand. 4. And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the LORD spake unto you in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, in the day of the assembly: and the LORD gave them unto me. 5. And I turned my self and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made, and there they be, as the LORD commanded me. 6. ¶ And the children of Israel took their journey from Beeroth of the children of Jaakan, to Mosera: there Aaron died, and there he was buried; and Eleazar his son ministered in the priests office in his stead. 7. From thence they journeyed unto Gudgodah; and from Gudgodah to Jotbath, a land of rivers of waters. 8. ¶ At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister unto him, and to bless in his name unto this day. 9. Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren: the LORD is his inheritance, according as the LORD thy God promised him. 10. And I stayed in the mount, according to the first time, forty days and forty nights, and the LORD hearkned unto me at that time also, and the LORD would not destroy thee. 11. And the LORD said unto me, Arise, take thy journey before the people, that they may go in, and possess the land which I sware unto their fathers to give unto them.

There were four things, in and by which God shewed himself reconciled to Israel; and made them truly great and happy; and in which God's goodness took occasion from their badness to make himself the more illustrious.

1. He gave them his law; gave it them in writing; as a standing pledge of his favour. Tho' the tables that were first written were broken, because they had broke the commandments, and God might justly break the covenant; yet when his anger was turned away, the tables were renewed, *ver. 1, 2*. Note, God's putting his law in our hearts, and writing it in our inward parts, is the surest evidence of our reconciliation to God, and the best earnest of our happiness in him. Moses is bid to hew the tables, for the law prepares the heart by conviction and humiliation for the grace of God; but it is only that grace that then writes the law in it. Moses made an ark of Shittim-wood, *ver. 3*. a plain chest, the same, I suppose, in which the tables were afterwards preserved: but Bezaleel is said to make it, *Exod. xxxvii. 1*. because he afterwards finished it up, and over-laid it with gold. Or, Moses is said to make it, because when he went up the second time into the mount, he ordered it to be made by Bezaleel, against he came down. And it is observable, that for this reason, the ark was the first thing that God gave orders about, *Exod. xxv. 10*. And this left an earnest to the congregation, that the tables should not miscarry this second time, as they had done the first. God will send his law and gospel to those whose hearts are prepared as arks to receive them. Christ is the ark in which now our salvation is kept safe, that it may not be lost, as it was in the first Adam, when he had it in his own hand.

Observe, (1.) What it was that God wrote on the two tables; the ten commandments, *ver. 4*. or ten words; intimating in how little a compass they were contained: they were not ten volumes, but ten words; it was the same with the first writing, and both the same that he spoke in the mount. The second edition needed no correction or amendment. Nor did what he wrote, differ from what he spoke: the written word is as truly the word of God, as that which he spake to his servants the prophets. (2.) What care was taken of it. These two tables thus engraven, were faithfully laid up in the ark. And there they be, saith Moses, pointing, it is probable, towards the sanctuary, *ver. 5*. That good thing which was committed to him, he transmitted to them, and left it pure and entire in their hands, now let them look to it at their peril. Thus we may say to the rising generation, God has intrusted us with bibles, sabbaths, sacraments, &c. as tokens of his presence and favour, and there they be; we lodge them with you, *2 Tim. i. 13, 14*.

2. He led them forwards towards Canaan, tho' they in their hearts turned back towards Egypt, and he might justly have chosen their delusions, *ver. 6, 7*. He brought them to a land of rivers of waters, out of a dry and barren wilderness: sometimes God supplied their wants by an ordinary course of nature; when that failed, then by miracles; and yet after this, when they were brought into a little distress, we find them distrusting God, and murmuring, *Numb. xx. 3, 4*.

3. He appointed a standing ministry among them, to deal for them in holy things. At that time, when Moses went up a second time to the mount, or soon after, he had orders to separate the tribe of Levi to God and to his immediate service, they having distinguished themselves by their zeal against the worshippers of the golden calf, *ver. 8, 9*. The Kohathites carried the ark; they, and the other Levites, stood before the Lord, to minister to him, in all the offices of the tabernacle; and the priests, who were of that tribe, were to bless the people. This was a standing ordinance, which had now continued almost forty years; even unto this day; and provision was made for the perpetuating of it, by the settled maintenance of that tribe, which was such as gave them great encouragement in their work, and no diversion from it. The Lord is his inheritance. Note, A settled ministry is a great blessing to a people, and a special token of God's favour. And since the particular priest could not continue by reason of death, God shewed his care of the people in securing a succession, which Moses takes notice of here, *ver. 6*. When Aaron died, the priesthood did not die with him, but Eleazar his son ministered in his stead, and took care of the ark, in which the tables of stone, those precious stones, were deposited, that they should suffer no damage; there they be, and he has the custody of them. Under the law, a succession in the ministry was kept up, by an entail of the office on a certain tribe and family. But now, under the gospel, when the effusion of the Spirit is more plentiful and powerful, the succession is kept up by the Spirit's operation on mens hearts, qualifying men for, and inclining men to that work, some in every age, that the name of Israel may not be blotted out.

4. He accepted Moses as an advocate or intercessor for them, and therefore constituted him their prince and leader, *ver. 10, 11*. The Lord hearkned unto me, and said, arise, go before the people. It was a mercy to them, that they had such a friend, so faithful both to him that appointed him, and to them for whom he was appointed. It was fit that he who had saved them from ruin, by his intercession in heaven, should have the conduct and command of them. And herein he was a type of Christ,

Christ, who as he ever lives making intercession for us, so he has all power both in heaven and in earth.

12. ¶ And now Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, 13. To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes which I command thee this day for thy good? 14. Behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens is the LORDs thy God, the earth also with all that therein is. 15. Only the LORD had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day. 16. Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked. 17. For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward. 18. He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. 19. Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. 20. Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name. 21. He is thy praise, and he is thy God that hath done for thee these great and terrible things which thine eyes have seen. 22. Thy fathers went down into Egypt with threescore and ten persons; and now the LORD thy God hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude.

Here is a most pathetic exhortation to obedience, inferred from the premises, and urged with very powerful arguments, and a great deal of persuasive rhetoric. He brings it in like an orator, with an appeal to his auditors, *And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee?* ver. 12. Ask what he requires; as David, *Psal. cxvi. 12. What shall I render?* When we have received mercy from God, it becomes us to enquire what returns we shall make to him. Consider what he requires, and you will find it is nothing but what is highly just and reasonable in itself, and of unspeakable benefit and advantage to you. Let us see here what he doth require, and what a great deal of reason there is, why we should do what he requires.

1. We are here most plainly directed in our duty, both to God, to our neighbour, and to ourselves. (1.) We are here taught our duty to God, both in the disposition and affections of our souls, and in the actions of our lives; our principles, and our practices. (1.) We must fear the Lord our God, ver. 12. And again, ver. 20. We must adore his majesty, acknowledge his authority, stand in awe of his power, and dread his wrath. This is gospel-duty, *Rev. xiv. 6, 7.* (2.) We must love him, be well-pleased that he is, desire that he may be, ours, and delight in the contemplation of him, and in communion with him. Fear him as a great God, and our Lord, love him as a good God, and our father and benefactor. (3.) We must walk in his ways, *i. e.* the ways which he has appointed us to walk in. The whole course of our conversation, must be conformable to his holy will. (4.) We must serve him, ver. 20. Serve him with all our heart and soul, ver. 12. devote ourselves to his honour, put ourselves under his government, and lay out ourselves to advance all the interests of his kingdom among men. And we must be hearty and zealous in his service, engage and employ our inward man in his work, and what we do for him, must do it cheerfully, and with a good will. (5.) We must keep his commandments and his statutes, ver. 13. Having given up ourselves to his service, we must make his revealed will our rule in every thing; perform all he prescribes; forbear all he forbids; firmly believing that all the statutes he commands us, are for our good. Besides the reward of obedience, which will be our unspeakable gain, there is true honour and pleasure in obedience. It is really for our present good, to be meek and humble, chaste and sober, just and charitable, patient and contented; these make us easy, and safe, and pleasant, and truly great. (6.) We must give honour to God, in swearing by his name, ver. 20. so give him the honour of his omniscience, his sovereignty, his justice, as well as of his necessary existence. Swear by his name, and not by the name of any creature, or false god, whenever an oath or confirmation is called for. (7.) To him we must cleave, ver. 20. Having chosen him for our God, we must faithfully and constantly abide with him, and never forsake him. Cleave to him as one we love and delight in; trust and confide in; and from whom we have great expectations.

(2.) We are here taught our duty to our neighbour, ver. 19. Love ye the stranger. And if the stranger, much more our brethren, as ourselves. If the Israelites that were such a peculiar people, so particularly distinguished from all people, must be kind to strangers, much more must we, that are not inclosed in such a pale; we must have a tender concern for all that share with us

in the human nature, and as we have opportunity, that is, according to their necessities, and our abilities, we must do good unto all men. Two arguments are here urged to enforce this duty. (1.) God's common providence, which extends itself to all nations of men, they being all made of one blood. God loveth the stranger, ver. 18. *i. e.* he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things, even to those that are Gentiles, and strangers to the common-wealth of Israel and to Israel's God. He knows those perfectly, whom we know nothing of. He gives food and raiment even to those, to whom he has not shewed his word and statutes. God's common gifts to mankind oblige us to honour all men. Or, It notes the particular care providence takes of strangers in distress, which we ought to praise him for (*Psal. cxlvi. 9. The Lord preserveth the strangers*) and to imitate him in, to serve him, and concur with him therein, being forward to make ourselves instruments in his hand of kindness to strangers. (2.) The afflicted condition which the Israelites themselves had been in, when they were strangers in Egypt. They that have themselves been in distress, and have found mercy with God, should sympathize most feelingly with those that are in the like distress, and be ready to shew kindness to them. The people of the Jews, notwithstanding those repeated commands given them to be kind to strangers, conceived a rooted antipathy to the Gentiles, whom they looked upon with the utmost disdain, which made them envy them the grace of God, and the gospel of Christ, and that brought a final ruin upon them.

(3.) We are here taught our duty to ourselves, ver. 16. Circumcise the foreskin of your hearts, *i. e.* cast away from you all corrupt affections and inclinations, which hinder you from fearing and loving God. Mortify the flesh, with the lusts of it. Away with all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, which obstructs the free course of the word of God to your hearts. Rest not in the circumcision of the body, which was only the sign, and be circumcised in heart, which is the thing signified. See *Rom. ii. 29.* The command of Christ goes further than this, and obligeth us not only to cut off the foreskin of the heart, which may easily be spared, but to cut off the right hand, and to pluck out the right eye, that is an offence to us: the more spiritual the person is, the more spiritual we are obliged to be, and the more diligent in mortifying sin. And be no more stiff-necked, as hitherto, chap. ix. 24. Be not any longer obstinate against commands and corrections, but ready to comply with the Lord in both. The circumcision of the heart, makes it ready to yield to God, and draw in his yoke.

2. We are here most pathetically persuaded to our duty. Let but reason rule us, and religion will.

1. Consider the greatness and glory of God, and therefore fear him, and from that principle serve and obey him. What is it that is thought to make man great, but great honour, power, and possessions? Think then how great the Lord our God is, and greatly to be feared. (1.) He hath great honour, a name above every name, ver. 17. He is God of gods, and Lord of lords. Angels are called gods, so are magistrates, and the Gentiles had gods many, and lords many, the creatures of their own fancy, but God is infinitely above all these nominal deities. What an absurdity would it be for them to go worship other gods, when the God to whom they had sworn allegiance was the God of gods? (2.) He has great power. He is a mighty God and terrible, (ver. 17.) which regardeth not persons. He has the power of a conqueror, and so he is terrible to those that resist him, and rebel against him. He has the power of a judge, and so he is just to all those that appeal to him, or appear before him. And it is as much the greatness and honour of a judge to be impartial in his justice, without respect to persons or bribes, as it is to a general to be terrible to the enemy. Our God is both. (3.) He hath great possessions. Heaven and earth are his, ver. 14. and all the hosts and stars of both. Therefore he is able to bear us in his service, and to make up the losses we sustain in our duty to him. And yet therefore he has no need of us, or any thing we have, or can do; we are undone without him; but he is happy without us: which makes the condescensions of his grace in accepting us and our services truly admirable. Heaven and earth are his possession, and yet the Lord's portion is his people.

2. Consider the goodness and grace of God, and therefore love him, and from that principle serve and obey him. His goodness is his glory, as much as his greatness.

1. He is good to all. Whoever he finds miserable, to them he will be found merciful. ver. 18. He executeth the judgment of the fatherless and widow. It is his honour to help the helpless, and to succour those that most need relief, and that men are apt to do injury to, or at least to put a slight upon. See *Psal. lxxviii. 4, 5.—cxlvi. 7, 9.*

2. But truly God is good to Israel, in a special manner, and therefore they are under special obligations to him. He is thy praise, and he is thy God, ver. 21. Therefore love him and serve him, because of the relation wherein he stands to thee. He is thy God, a God in covenant with thee, and as such he is thy praise, *i. e.* (1.) He puts honour upon thee; he is the God in whom thou mayst boast all the day long; that thou knowest him, and art known of him. If he be thy God, he is thy glory. (2.) He expects honour from thee. He is thy praise, *i. e.* he is the God whom

whom thou art bound to praise; if he have not praise from thee, whence may he expect it? He *inhabits the praises of Israel*.

Consider 1. The gracious choice he made of Israel, *ver. 15*. he had a delight in thy fathers, and therefore chose their seed: Not that there was any thing in them to merit his favour, or to recommend them to it, but so it seemed good in his eyes. He would be kind to them, tho' he had no need of them.

2. The great things he had done for Israel, *ver. 21, 22*. He minds them not only of what they had heard with their ears, and which their fathers had told them of, but of what they had seen with their eyes, and which they must tell their children of, particularly that within a few generations seventy souls (for they were no more when Jacob went down into Egypt) increased to a great nation, *as the stars of heaven for multitude*. And the more they were in number, the more praise and service God expected from them; yet it proved as in the old world, that when they began to multiply, they corrupted themselves.

C H A P. XI.

With this chapter Moses concludes his preface to the repetition of the statutes and judgments, which they must observe to do: He repeats the general charge, ver. 1. and having in the close of the foregoing chapter begun to mention the great things God had done among them; in this, 1. He instances in several of the great works God had done before their eyes, ver. 2—7. 2. He sets before them for the future, life and death, the blessing and the curse according as they did or did not keep God's commandments. That they should certainly prosper if they were obedient, should be blessed with plenty of all good things, ver. 8—15. and with victory over their enemies, and the enlargement of their coast thereby, ver. 22—25. But their disobedience would undoubtedly be their ruin, ver. 16, 17. 3. He directs them what means to use that they might keep in mind the law of God, ver. 18—21. And, 4. Concludes all with a solemn putting them to their choices which they would have, the blessing or the curse, ver. 26—32.

1. **T**herefore thou shalt love the LORD thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments alway. 2. And know you this day: for *I speak* not with your children which have not known, and which have not seen the chastisement of the LORD your God, his greatness, his mighty hand, and his stretched out arm, 3. And his miracles, and his acts which he did in the midst of Egypt, unto Pharaoh the king of Egypt, and unto all his land; 4. And what he did unto the army of Egypt, unto their horses, and to their chariots, how he made the water of the Red sea to overflow them as they pursued after you, and *how* the LORD hath destroyed them unto this day; 5. And what he did unto you in the wilderness, until ye came into this place; 6. And what he did unto Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben: how the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and their tents, and all the substance that *was* in their possession in the midst of all Israel. 7. But your eyes have seen all the great acts of the LORD, which he did.

Because God has made thee *as the stars of heaven for multitude*, so the chapter before concludes, *therefore thou shalt love the Lord thy God*, so this begins. Those whom God has built up into families, whose beginning was small, but their latter end greatly encreaseth, should use that as an argument with themselves why they should serve God. Thou shalt *keep his charge*, *i. e.* the oracles of his word, and ordinances of his worship, with which they were intrusted, and for which they accountable. It is a phrase often used concerning the office of the priests and Levites, for all Israel was a kingdom of priests, a holy nation. Observe the connexion of these two: *Thou shalt love the Lord, and keep his charge*. Since love will work in obedience, and that only is acceptable obedience which flows from a principle of love, *1 Joh. v. 3*.

He goes on to mention divers of the great and terrible works of God which their *eyes had seen*, *ver. 7*. This part of his discourse he addresseth to the *seniors* among them, the elders in age, and probably the elders in office were so, and were now his immediate auditors; there were some among them that could remember their deliverance out of Egypt, all above fifty, and to them he speaks this, not to the children, who knew it by hearsay only, *ver. 2*. Note, God's mercies to us when we were young, we should remember and retain the impressions of when we are old; what our eyes have seen, especially in our early days, has affected us, and should be improved by us long after.

They had seen what terrible judgments God had executed upon the enemies of Israel's peace; 1. Upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians that enslaved them. What a fine country was ruined and laid waste by one plague after another to force Israel's enlargement,

ver. 3. What a fine army was entirely drowned in the Red-sea, to prevent Israel's being re-enslaved, *ver. 4*. Thus did he give Egypt for their ransom, *Isa. xliii. 3*. Rather shall that famous kingdom be destroyed, than that Israel shall not be delivered. 2. Upon Dathan and Abiram that embroiled them. Remember *what he did in the wilderness*, *ver. 5*. by how many necessary chastisements (as they are called, *ver. 2*.) they were kept from ruining themselves. Particularly, when those daring Reubenites defied the authority of Moses, and headed a dangerous rebellion against God himself, which threatened the ruin of the whole nation, and might have ended in that, if the divine power had not immediately crushed the rebellion, by burying the rebels alive; them, and *all that was in their possession*, *ver. 6*. What was done against them, though misinterpreted by the disaffected party, *Numb. xvi. 41*. was really done in mercy to Israel. To be saved from the mischiefs of insurrections at home is as great kindness to a people, and as obliging, as protection from the invasion of enemies abroad.

8. Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments which I command you this day, that ye may be strong, and go in and possess the land whither you go to possess it: 9. And that ye may prolong *your* days in the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers to give unto them, and to their seed, a land that floweth with milk and hony. 10. ¶ For the land whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs: 11. But the land whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: 12. A land which the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year, even unto the end of the year. 13. ¶ And it shall come to pass, if you shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul; 14. That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine-oyl. 15. And I will send grass in thy fields, for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full. 16. Take heed to your selves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them: 17. And *then* the LORDs wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit, and *lest* ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you.

Still he harps upon the same string, as loth to conclude till he had gained his point. *If thou wilt enter into life*, if thou wilt enter into Canaan, a type of that life, and find it a good land indeed to thee, *keep the commandments, keep all the commandments which I command you this day; love God, and serve him with all your heart*.

1. Because this was the way, to get and keep possession of the promised land. (1.) It was the way to get possession, *ver. 3*. *That ye may be strong* for war, and so *go in and possess it*. So little did they know either of hardship or hazard in the wars, of Canaan, that he doth not say they should go in, and fight for it; no, they had nothing in effect to do but go in and possess it. He doth not go about to teach them the art of war, how to draw the bow, and use the sword, and keep ranks, that they might be strong and go in and possess the land; no, but let them *keep God's commandments*, and their religion, while they were true to it, would be their strength, and secure their success. (2.) It was the way to keep possession, *ver. 9*. *That ye may prolong your days in this land*, that your eye is upon. Sin tends to the shortning of the days of particular persons, and to the shortning of the days of a peoples prosperity; but obedience will be a lengthning out of the tranquillity.

2. Because the land of Canaan into which they were going had a more sensible dependence upon the blessing of heaven than the land of Egypt had, *ver. 10, 11, 12*. Egypt was a country fruitful enough, but it was all flat, and was watered, not as other countries with rain, (it is said of Egypt, *Zech. xiv. 18*. that *it has no rain*) but by the overflowing of the river Nile at a certain season of the year; to the improving of which there was necessary a great deal of the art and labour of the husbandman; so that in Egypt a man must bestow as much cost and pains upon a field, as upon a garden of herbs. And this made them the more apt to imagine, that the power of their own hands got them this wealth. But the land of Canaan was an uneven country, a land of hills and vallies, which not only gave a more pleasing prospect to the eye, but yielded a greater variety of soils for the several purposes of the husbandman. It was a land that had no great rivers in it, except Jordan, but *drank water*

of the rain of heaven. And so (1.) saved them a great deal of labour. While the Egyptians were ditching and guttering in the fields, up to the knees in mud, to bring water to their land, which otherwise would soon become like the heath in the wilderness, the Israelites could sit in their houses warm and easy, and leave it to God to water their land with the former and the latter rain, which is called *the river of God*, (Psal. lxxv. 9.) perhaps in allusion to, and contempt of, the river of Egypt, which that nation was so proud of. Note, The better God has provided by our outward condition for our ease and convenience, the more we should abound in his service: the less we have to do for our bodies, the more we should do for God and our souls. (2.) So he directed them to look upwards to God, who giveth us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, Acts xiv. 17. and promised to be himself as *the dew unto Israel*, Hos. xiv. 5. Note, 1. The greatest comfort and sweetness of any mercy is to see it coming from heaven, and the immediate gift of divine providence. 2. The closer dependence we have upon God, the more cheerful we should be in our obedience to him. See how Moses here magnifies the land of Canaan, above all other lands, that the *eyes of God were always upon it*. i. e. they should be so, to see that nothing was wanting, while they kept close to God and duty; its fruitfulness should be not so much the happy product of its soil, but the immediate fruit of the divine blessing; and it appears to have been so by its present state, for it is said to be at this day, now God is departed from it, as barren a spot of ground as perhaps any under heaven. Call it not Naomi, call it Marah.

3. Because God would certainly bless them with an abundance of all good things, if they would love him and serve him, ver. 13, 14, 15. *I will give you the rain of your land in due season*, so that they should neither want it when the ground called for it, nor have it in excess; but the former rain which fell at seed-time, and the latter rain, which fell before the harvest, Amos iv. 7. This represented all the seasonable blessings God would bestow upon them, especially spiritual comforts which should come as *the latter and former rain*, Hos. vi. 3. And the earth thus watered produced, (1.) Fruits for the service of man; *corn, and wine, and oil*, Psal. civ. 13, 14, 15. (2.) Grass for the cattle, that they also might be serviceable to man; that *he might eat of them and be full*, ver. 15. Godliness hath here the promise of the life that now is; but the favour of God shall put gladness into the heart, more than the increase of corn, and wine, and oil, will.

4. Because their revolt from God to idols would certainly be their ruin, ver. 16, 17. *Take heed that your hearts be not deceived*. All that forsake God to set their affection upon, or pay their devotion to, any creature, will find themselves wretchedly deceived to their own destruction, and this will aggravate it, that it was purely for want of taking heed. A little care would have prevented their being imposed upon by the great deceiver. To awaken them to take heed, Moses here tells them plainly, that if they should *turn aside to other gods*, 1. They would provoke the wrath of God against them, and *who knows the power of that anger?* 2. Good things would be turned away from them; the heaven would withhold its rain, and then of course the earth would not yield its fruit. 3. Evil things would come upon them, they would perish quickly from off this good land. And the better the land was, the more grievous it would be to perish from it. The goodness of the land would not be their security, when the badness of the inhabitants had made them ripe for ruin.

18. ¶ Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. 19. And ye shall teach them your children; speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. 20. And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: 21. That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD swear unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth. 22. ¶ For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him; 23. Then will the LORD drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations, and mightier than your selves. 24. Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread, shall be yours: from the wilderness, and Lebanon, from the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea, shall your coast be. 25. There shall no man be able to stand before you: for the LORD your God shall lay the fear of you, and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as he hath said unto you.

Here, 1. He repeats the directions he had given for their guidance and assistance in their obedience, and for the keeping up

of religion among them, ver. 18; 19, 20. which is much to the same purpose with what we had before, chap. vi. 6, &c. Let us all be directed by the three rules here given. (1.) Let our hearts be filled with the word of God. *Lay up these words in your heart and in your soul*. The heart must be the treasury or store-house in which the word of God must be laid up, to be used upon all occasions. We cannot expect good practices in the conversation, unless there be good thoughts, good affections, and good principles in the heart. (2.) Let our eyes be fixed upon the word of God. Bind these words for a sign upon your hand, which is always in view, (Isa. xlix. 16.) and as frontlets between your eyes, which you cannot avoid the sight of; let them be as ready and familiar to you, and have your eye as constantly upon them, as if they were written upon your door-posts, and could not be overlooked either when you go out, or when you come in. Thus we must lay God's judgments before us, having a constant regard to them, as the guide of our way, as the rule of our work, Psal. cxix. 30. (3.) Let our tongues be employed about the word of God. Let it be the subject of our familiar discourse, wherever we are; especially, with our children, who must be taught the service of God, as the one thing needful, much more needful, than either the rules of decency, or the calling they must live by in this world. Great care and pains must be taken to acquaint children betimes, and to affect them with the word of God, and the wondrous things of his law. Nor will any thing contribute more to the prosperity and perpetuity of religion in a nation, than the good education of children: if the seed be holy, it is the substance of a land.

2. He repeats the assurances he had before given them, in God's name, of prosperity and success, if they were obedient: 1. They should have a happy settlement, ver. 21. Their days should be multiplied, and when they were fulfilled, the days of their children likewise should be many, as the days of heaven, i. e. Canaan should be sure to them and their heirs for ever, as long as the world stands, if they did not by their own sin throw themselves out of it.

3. It should not be in the power of their enemies to give them any disturbance, or make them upon any account uneasy; if ye will keep God's commandments, and be careful to do your duty, ver. 22. God will not only crown the labours of the husbandmen with plenty of the fruits of the earth; but he will own and succeed the more glorious undertakings of the men of war; victory shall attend your arms: which way soever they turn, God will drive out these nations, and put you in possession of their land, ver. 23, 24. Their territories should be enlarged to the utmost extent of the promise, Gen. xv. 18. And all their neighbours should stand in awe of them, ver. 25. Nothing contributes more to the making a nation considerable abroad, valuable to its friends, and formidable to its enemies, than religion reigning in it; for who can be against those that have God for them? and he is certainly for those, that are sincerely for him, Prov. xiv. 34.

26. ¶ Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: 27. A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you this day: 28. And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods which ye have not known. 29. And it shall come to pass when the LORD thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal. 30. Are they not on the other side Jordan, by the way where the sun goeth down in the land of the Canaanites, which dwell in the champion over against Gilgal, beside the plains of Moreh? 31. For ye shall pass over Jordan to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God giveth you, and ye shall possess it and dwell therein. 32. And ye shall observe to do all the statutes and judgments which I set before you this day.

Here Moses concludes his general exhortation to obedience; and his management is very affecting, and such as, one would think, should have engaged them for ever to God, and should have left impressions upon them, never to be worn out. 1. He sums up all his arguments for obedience in two words, *the blessing, and the curse*, ver. 26. i. e. the rewards and the punishments, as they stand in the promises and the threatenings, which are the great sanctions of the law, taking hold of hope and fear, those two handles of the soul, by which it is caught, held and managed. These two, the blessing and the curse, he set before them, that is, 1. He explained them, that they might know them; he instanced in the particulars contained both in the blessing and in the curse, that they might see the more fully how desirable the blessing was, and how dreadful the curse. (2.) He confirmed them, that they might believe them; made it evident to them, by the proofs he produced of his own commission, that the blessing

blessing was not a fool's paradise, nor the curse a bug-bear, but both real declarations of the purpose of God concerning them. (3.) He put them to their choice, which of these they would have. So fairly doth he deal with them, and so far is he from *putting out the eyes of these men*, as he was charged, *Numb. xvi. 14.* They and we are plainly told, on what terms we stand with Almighty God. 1. If we be obedient to his laws, we may be sure of a blessing, *ver. 27.* But, 2. If we be disobedient, we may be as sure of a curse, *ver. 28.* *Say ye to the righteous, for God hath said it, and all the world cannot unsay it, that it shall be well with them: But woe to the wicked, it shall be ill with them.*

2. He appoints a publick and solemn proclamation to be made of the blessing and curse which he had set before them, upon the two mountains of Gerizim and Ebal, *ver. 29, 30.* We have more particular directions for this solemnity, *chap. xxvii. 11.* and an account of the performance of it, *Josh. viii. 33, &c.* It was to be done, and was done, presently upon their coming into Canaan, that when they first took possession of that land, they might know upon what terms they stood. The place where this was to be done, is particularly described by Moses, tho' he never saw it, which is one circumstance among many, that evidences his divine instructions. It is said to be near the plain, or oaks, or meadows of Moreh, which was one of the first places that Abraham came to in Canaan; so that in sending them thither to hear the blessing and the curse, God minded them of the promise he made to Abraham in that very place, *Gen. xii. 6, 7.* The mention of this appointment here, serves (1.) For the encouragement of their faith in the promise of God, that they should be masters of Canaan quickly. Do it (saith Moses) on the other side Jordan, *ver. 30.* for you may be confident *you shall pass over Jordan*, *ver. 31.* The institution of this service to be done in Canaan, was an assurance to them, that they should be brought into possession of it, and a token, like that which God gave to Moses, *Exod. iii. 12.* *Ye shall serve God upon this mountain.* And, (2.) It serves for an engagement upon them to be obedient, that they might escape that curse, and obtain that blessing, which besides what they had already heard, they must shortly be witnesses to the solemn publication of, *ver. 32.* *Ye shall observe to do the statutes and judgments, that you may not in that solemnity be witnesses against yourselves.*

C H A P. XII.

Moses at this chapter comes to the particular statutes which he had to give in charge to Israel, and he begins with those which relate to the worship of God; and particularly those which explain the second commandment, about which God is in a special manner jealous, (1.) They must utterly destroy all relicks and remains of idolatry, ver. 1—3. (2.) They must keep close to the tabernacle, ver. 4, 5. The former precept was intended to prevent all false worship: the latter to preserve the worship God had instituted. By this latter law, 1. They are commanded to bring all their offerings to the altar of God, and all their holy things to the place which he should chuse, ver. 6, 7, 11, 12, 14, 18, 26, 27, 28. 2. They are forbidden in general, to do as they now did in the wilderness, ver. 8—11. And as the Canaanites had done, ver. 29—32. And in particular, to eat the hallowed things at their own houses, ver. 13, 17, 18. Or, to forsake the instituted ministry, ver. 19. 3. They are permitted to eat flesh, as common food at their own houses, provided, they did not eat the blood, ver. 15, 16. And again, ver. 20—26.

1. **T**Hese are the statutes and judgments which ye shall observe to do in the land which the LORD God of thy fathers giveth thee to possess it, all the days that ye live upon the earth. 2. Ye shall utterly destroy all the places wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree. 3. And you shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire, and you shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place. 4. Ye shall not do so unto the LORD your God.

From those great original truths, That there is a God, and that there is but one God, arise those great fundamental laws, that that God is to be worshipped, and he only, and that therefore we are to have no other God before him: that is the first commandment, and the second is a guard upon it, or a hedge about it. To prevent a revolt to false gods, we are forbidden to worship the true God, in such a way and manner as the false gods were worshipped; and are commanded to observe the instituted ordinances of worship, that we may adhere to the proper object of worship. For this reason, Moses is very large in his exposition of the second commandment. What is contained in this, and the four following chapters, mostly refers to that. *These are statutes and judgments which they must observe to do, ver. 1.*

(1.) In the days of their rest and prosperity, when they should be masters of Canaan. We must not think, that our religion is instituted only to be our work in the years of our servitude, our entertainment in the places of our solitude; and our consolation in affliction only; no, when we come to possess a good land, still we must keep up the worship of God, in Canaan, as well as in a wilderness; when we are grown up, as well as when we are children; when we are full of business, as well as when we have nothing else to do. (2.) *All their days*, as long as ye live upon the earth. While we are here in our state of trial, we must continue in our obedience, even to the end, and never leave our duty, nor grow weary of well-doing.

Now, 1. They are here charged to abolish and extirpate all those things that the Canaanites had served their idol gods with, *ver. 2, 3.* Here is no mention of idol-temples, which countenanceth the opinion some have, that the tabernacle Moses reared in the wilderness, was the first habitation that ever was made for religious uses; and that from it temples took their rise. But the places that had been used, and were now to be levelled, were inclosures for their worship on *mountains and hills*, as if the height of the ground would give advantage to the ascent of their devotions, and under green trees, either because pleasant, or because awful: and whatever makes the mind easy, and reverent, contracts and composes it, was thought to befriend devotion. The solemn shade and silence of a grove, is still admired by those that are disposed to contemplation. But the advantages these retirements gave to the Gentiles worship of their idols, was, that they concealed those works of darkness, which could not bear the light; and therefore they must all be destroyed, with the altars, pillars, and images, that had been used by the natives in the worship of their gods, so as the very names of them might be buried in oblivion; and not only not be remembered with respect, but not remembered at all. They must thus consult, (1.) The reputation of their land; let it never be said of this holy land, that it had been thus polluted, but let all these dunghills be carried away, as things they were ashamed of. (2.) The safety of their religion; let none be left remaining, lest profane, unthinking people, especially in degenerate ages, should make use of them in the service of the God of Israel. Let these pest-houses be demolished, as things they were afraid of. He begins the statutes that relate to divine worship with this, because there must first be an abhorrence of that which is evil, before there can be a steady adherence to that which is good, *Rom. xii. 9.* The kingdom of God, must be set up both in persons and places, upon the ruins of the devil's kingdom; for they cannot stand together, nor can there be any communion between Christ and Belial.

2. They are charged not to translate the rites and usages of idolaters into the worship of God; no, not under colour of beautifying and improving it, *ver. 4.* *Ye shall not do so to the Lord your God*, i. e. you must not think to do honour to him, by offering sacrifices on mountains and hills, erecting pillars, planting groves, and setting up images; no, you must not indulge a luxurious fancy in your worship, nor think, whatever pleaseth that, will please God: *he is above all gods*, and will not be worshipped as other gods are.

5. But unto the place which the LORD your God shall chuse out of all your tribes, to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come: 6. And thither ye shall bring your burnt-offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave-offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your free-will-offerings, and the firstlings of your herds, and of your flocks. 7. And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that you put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee. 8. Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes. 9. For ye are not as yet come to the rest, and to the inheritance which the LORD your God giveth you. 10. But when ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God giveth you to inherit, and when he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety: 11. Then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall chuse to cause his name to dwell there, thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave-offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the LORD. 12. And ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and the Levite that is within your gates; forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you. 13. Take heed to thy self that thou offer not thy burnt-offerings in every place that thou seest. 14. But in the place which the LORD shall chuse

choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt-offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee. 15. Notwithstanding, thou mayest kill and eat flesh in all thy gates, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee: the unclean and the clean may eat thereof, as of the roe-buck, and as of the hart. 16. Only ye shall not eat the blood; ye shall pour it upon the earth as water. 17. ¶ Thou mayst not eat within thy gates the tithe of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thy oyl, or the firstlings of thy herds, or of thy flock, nor any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor thy free-will-offerings, or heave-offering of thine hand: 18. But thou must eat them before the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose, thou and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant and thy maid-servant, and the Levite that is within thy gates: and thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God in all that thou puttest thine hands unto. 19. Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon the earth. 20. ¶ When the LORD thy God shall enlarge thy border as he hath promised thee, and thou shalt say, I will eat flesh (because thy soul longeth to eat flesh) thou mayest eat flesh whatsoever thy soul lusteth after. 21. If the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to put his name there, be too far from thee; then thou shalt kill of thy herd and of thy flock, which the LORD hath given thee, as I have commanded thee, and thou shalt eat in thy gates whatsoever thy soul lusteth after. 22. Even as the roe-buck and the hart is eaten, so thou shalt eat them: the unclean and the clean shall eat of them alike. 23. Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood is the life, and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh. 24. Thou shalt not eat it; thou shalt pour it upon the earth as water. 25. Thou shalt not eat it, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, when thou shalt do *that which is* right in the sight of the LORD. 26. Only thy holy things which thou hast, and thy vows, thou shalt take, and go unto the place which the LORD shall choose: 27. And thou shalt offer thy burnt-offerings, the flesh and the blood, upon the altar of the LORD thy God: and the blood of thy sacrifices shall be poured out upon the altar of the LORD thy God, and thou shalt eat the flesh. 28. Observe and hear all these words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee and with thy children after thee for ever, when thou doest *that which is* good and right in the sight of the LORD thy God. 29. ¶ When the LORD thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land: 30. Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee, and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. 31. Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the LORD which he hateth, have they done unto their gods: for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods. 32. What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

There is not any one particular precept (as I remember) in all the law of Moses, so largely pressed, and inculcated, as this, by which they are all tied to bring their sacrifices to that one altar which was set up in the court of the tabernacle, and there to perform all the rituals of their religion; for as to moral services, then, no doubt, as now, men might pray every where, as they did in their synagogues. The command to do this, and the prohibition of the contrary, are here repeated again and again, as we teach children: and yet we are sure, there is in scripture no vain repetition: but all this stress is laid upon it, (1.) Because of the strange proneness there was in the hearts of that people to idolatry and superstition, and the danger of their being seduced by the many temptations which they would be surrounded with. (2.) Because of the great use which the observance of this appointment would be of to them, both to prevent the introducing of corrupt customs into their worship, and to preserve among them unity and brotherly love; that meeting all in one place, they might continue both of one way, and of one heart. (3.) Because of the significancy of this appointment. They must keep to one place, in token of their belief of those two great truths,

which we find together, 1 Tim. ii. 5. That there is one God, and one mediator between God and man. It not only served to keep up the notion of the unity of the Godhead, but was an intimation to them (tho' they could not stedfastly discern it) of the one only way of approach to God, and communion with him; in, and by, the Messiah.

Let us now reduce this long charge to its proper heads.

1. It is here promised, that when they were settled in Canaan; when they had *rest from their enemies, and dwelt in safety*, God would choose a certain place, which he would appoint to be the center of their unity, to which they should bring all their offerings; ver. 10, 11. Observe, (1.) If they must be tied to one place, they should not be left in doubt concerning it, but should certainly know what place it was. Had Christ intended under the gospel to make any one place such a seat of power, as Rome pretends to be, we should not have been so much in the dark as we are, nor so far to seek about the nomination of the place. (2.) God doth not leave it to them to choose the place, lest the tribes should have quarrelled about it, each striving for their secular advantage to have it among them; but he reserves the choice to himself, as he doth the designation of the redeemer, and the institution of holy ordinances. (3.) He doth not appoint the place now, as he had appointed mount Gerizim and Ebal, for the pronouncing of the blessings and curses, chap. xi. 29. but reserves the doing of it till hereafter, that hereby they might be made to expect further directions from heaven, and a divine conduct after Moses should be removed.

The place God would choose, is said to be the place where he would put his name in, *i. e.* which he would have to be called his, where his honour should dwell, where he would manifest himself to his people, and make himself known, as men do by their names, and where he would receive addresses, by which his name is both praised and called upon. It was to be his habitation, where, as king of Israel, he would keep court, and be found by all those that reverently sought him. The ark was the token of God's presence, and where that was put, there God put his name, and that was his habitation; it contained the tables of the law; for none must expect to receive favours from God's hand, but those that are willing to *receive the law from his mouth*. The place God first chose for the ark to reside in, was Shiloh: and after that had sinned away its honours, we find the ark at Kirjath-jearim, and other places; but at length, in David's time, it was fixed at Jerusalem, and God said concerning Solomon's temple, more expressly than ever he had said concerning any other place, *This I have chosen for a house of sacrifice*, 2 Chron. vii. 12. Compare chap. vi. 5. Now under the gospel, we have no temple that sanctifies the gold, no altar that sanctifies the gift, but Christ only: and as to the places of worship, the prophets foretold, *That in every place the spiritual incense should be offered*, Mal. i. 11. And our Saviour hath declared, that those are accepted as true worshippers, that worship God in sincerity and truth, without regard either to this mountain, or Jerusalem, John iv. 21.

2. They are commanded to bring all their burnt-offerings and sacrifices to this place that God would choose, ver. 6. And again, ver. 11. *Thither shall ye bring all that I command you*. And, ver. 14. *There thou shalt offer thy burnt-offerings*. And ver. 27. *The flesh and the blood must be offered upon the altar of the Lord thy God*. And of their peace-offerings, here called their sacrifices, tho' they were to *eat the flesh*, yet *the blood* was to be *poured out upon the altar*. By this they were taught, that sacrifices and offerings God did not desire, nor accept for their own sake, nor for any intrinsic worth in them, as natural expressions of homage and adoration: but they received their virtue purely from the altar on which they were offered, as it typified Christ; whereas prayers and praises, as much more necessary and valuable, were to be offered every day by the people of God wherever they were. A devout Israelite, might honour God, and keep up communion with him, and obtain mercy from him, tho' he had not an opportunity, perhaps for many months together, of bringing a sacrifice to his altar. But this signified the obligation we christians are under, to offer up all our spiritual sacrifices to God in the name of Jesus Christ, hoping for acceptance only upon the score of his mediation, 1 Pet. ii. 5.

3. They are commanded to feast upon their hallowed things, before the Lord with holy joy. They must not only bring to the altar the sacrifices that were to be offered to God, but they must bring to the place of the altar, all those things which they were appointed by the law to eat and drink, to the honour of God, in token of their communion with him, ver. 6. *Their tithes, heave-offerings of their hand, i. e.* their first-fruits, their vows, and *free-will-offerings*, and firstlings, all those things which were to be religiously made use of, either by themselves, or by the priests and Levites, must be brought to the place which God would choose; as all the revenues of the crown, from all parts of the kingdom, are brought into the exchequer. And, ver. 7. *There ye shall eat before the Lord, and rejoice in all that you put your hands unto*. And again, ver. 12. *Ye shall rejoice before the Lord, ye and your sons and your daughters*. Observe here, 1. That what we do in the service of God, and to his glory, redounds to our benefit, if it be not our own fault. They that sacrifice to God, are welcome

to eat before him, and to feast upon their sacrifices: he *supps with us*, and *we with him*, Rev. iii. 20. If we glorify God, we edify ourselves, cultivate our own minds thro' the grace of God, by the increase of our knowledge and faith, the enlivening of devout affections, and the confirming of gracious habits and resolutions: thus is the soul nourished. 2. That work for God should be done with holy joy and cheerfulness. Ye shall *eat and rejoice*, ver. 7. And again, ver. 12. and ver. 18. (1.) Now while they were before the Lord, they must rejoice, ver. 12. It is the will of God, that we should serve him with gladness, and none displeased him more than they that *covered his altar with tears*, Mal. ii. 13. See what a good master we serve, that has made it our duty to sing at our work. Even the children and servants must rejoice with them before God, that the services of religion might be a pleasure to them, and not a task or drudgery. 2. They must *carry away with them* the grateful relish of that delight they found in communion with God, and must rejoice in all that they *put their hands unto*, ver. 7. Some of the comfort they had had in the business of religion, they must take with them into their common employments, and being thus strengthened in soul, whatever they did they must do it heartily and cheerfully. And this holy pious joy in God and his goodness, with which we are to rejoice evermore, would be the best preservative against the sin and snare of *vain and carnal mirth*, and a relief against the *sorrows of the world*.

4. They are commanded to be kind to the Levites. Did they feast with joy? The Levites must feast with them, and rejoice with them, ver. 12. And again, ver. 18. And a general caution, ver. 19. *Take heed, that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest*. There were Levites that attended the altar as assistants to the priests, and these must not be forsaken, that is, the service they performed must be constantly adhered to; no other altars must be set up, but that which God appointed; for that would be to forsake the Levites. But this here seems to be spoken of the Levites that were dispersed in the country, to instruct the people in the law of God, and to assist them in their devotions; for it is the *Levite within their gates*, that they are here commanded to make much of. It is a great mercy to have Levites near us, within our gates, that we may ask the law at their mouth, and at our feasts to be a check upon us, to restrain excesses. And it is the duty of people to be kind to their ministers, that give them good instructions, and set them good examples. As long as we live, we shall need their assistance, till we come to that world, where ordinances will be superseded, and therefore *as long as we live*, we must not forsake the Levites. The reason given, ver. 12. is, because *the Levite has no part nor inheritance with you*; so that he cannot grow rich by husbandry, or trade; let him therefore share with you in the comfort of your riches. They must give the Levites their tithes and offerings, settled on them by the law, because they had no other maintenance.

5. They are allowed to eat common flesh, but not the flesh of their offerings, in their own houses wherever they dwelt. What was any way devoted to God, they must not eat at home, ver. 13, 17. But what was not so devoted, they might kill, and eat of at their pleasure, ver. 15. And this permission is again repeated, ver. 20, 21, 22. It should seem, that while they were in the wilderness, they did not eat the flesh of any of those kind of beasts that were used in sacrifice, but what was killed at the door of the tabernacle, and part of it presented to God as a peace-offering, Lev. xvii. 3, 4. But when they came to Canaan, where they must live at a great distance from the tabernacle, they might kill what they pleased, for their own use, of their flocks and herds, without bringing part to the altar. This allowance is very express, and repeated, lest Satan should take occasion, from that law which forbade the eating of their sacrifices at their own houses, to suggest to them, as he did to our first parents, hard thoughts of God, as if he grudged them the enjoyment of what he had given them; *Thou mayest eat whatsoever thy soul lusteth after*. There is a natural regular appetite, which it is lawful to gratify with temperance and sobriety, not taking too great a pleasure in the gratification, nor being uneasy, if it be crossed. The unclean which might not eat of the holy things, might yet eat of the same sort of flesh when it was only used as common food. The distinction between clean persons and unclean was sacred, and designed for the preserving of the honour of their holy feasts, and therefore must not be brought into their ordinary meals.

This permission hath a double restriction.

1. They must eat according to the blessing which God had given them, ver. 15. Note, It is not only our wisdom, but our duty, to live according to our estates, and not to spend above what we have. As it is unjust on the one hand to hoard what should be laid out; so it is much more unjust, to lay out more than we have; for what is not our own, must needs be another's, who is thereby robbed and defrauded. And this, I say, is much more unjust, because it is easier afterwards to distribute what has been unduly spared, and so to make a sort of restitution for the wrong, than it is to repay to wife, and children, and creditors, what has been unduly spent. Between these two extremes, let wisdom find the mean, and then let watchfulness and resolution keep it.

2. They must not eat blood, ver. 16. and again, ver. 23. *Only be sure that thou eat not the blood*, ver. 24. *Thou shalt not eat it*, and ver. 25, *Thou shalt not eat it that it may go well with thee*. When

they could not bring the blood to the altar, to pour it out there before the Lord, as belonging to him, they must pour it out upon the earth, as not belonging to them, because it was the life, and therefore as an acknowledgment belonged to him who gives life, and as an atonement belonged to him to whom life is forfeited. Bishop Patrick thinks one reason why they were forbidden thus strictly the eating of blood, was to prevent the superstitions of the old idolaters about the blood of their sacrifices, which they thought their demons delighted in, and by eating of which they imagined that they had communion with them.

6. They are forbidden to keep up either their own corrupt usages in the wilderness, or the corrupt usages of their predecessors in the land of Canaan.

1. They must not keep up those ill customs which they had got in the wilderness, and which were connived at in consideration of the present unsettledness of their condition, ver. 8, 9. *Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day*. Never was there a better governor than Moses, and one would think never a better opportunity of keeping up good order and discipline than now among the people of Israel, when they lay so closely encamped under the eye of their governor, and yet it seems there was much amiss, and many irregularities among them. We must never expect to see any society, perfectly pure and right, and as it should be, till we come to the heavenly Canaan. They had sacrifices, and religious worships, courts of justice and civil government, and by the stoning of the man that *gathered sticks on the sabbath day*, it appears there was great strictness used in guarding the most weighty matters of the law; but being frequently upon the remove, and always at uncertainty, (1.) They could none of them observe the solemn feasts, and the rites of cleansing, with the exactness that the law required: And (2.) Those among them that were disposed to do amiss, had opportunity given them to do it, unobserved by the frequent interruptions which their removes gave to the administration of justice. But (saith Moses) when ye come to Canaan, ye shall not do as we do here. Note, When the people of God are in an unsettled condition, that may be tolerated, and dispensed with, which would by no means be allowed at another time. Cases of necessity are to be considered while the necessity continues, but that must not be done in Canaan, which was indulged in the wilderness. While a house is in the building, a great deal of dirt and rubbish is suffered to lie by it, which must all be taken away when the house is built. Moses was now about to lay down his life and government, and it is a comfort to him to foresee that Israel would be better in the next reign, than they had been in his.

2. They must not worship the Lord by any of those rites or ceremonies, which the nations of Canaan had made use of in the service of their gods, ver. 29—32. They must not so much as enquire into the modes and forms of idolatrous worship. What good would it do to them to *know those depths of Satan*? Rev. ii. 24. It is best to be ignorant of that which there is danger of being infected by. They must not introduce the customs of idolaters, (1.) Because it would be absurd to make those their patterns whom God had made their slaves and captives, cut off and destroyed from before them. The Canaanites had not flourished and prospered so much in the service of their gods, as that the Israelites should be invited to take up their customs. Those are wretchedly befotted indeed, who will walk in the way of sinners, after they have seen their end. (2.) Because some of their customs were most barbarous and inhuman, and such as trampled not only upon the light and law of nature, but upon natural affection itself, as *burning their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods*, ver. 31. The very mention of which is sufficient to make it odious, and possess us with a horror of it. (3.) Because their idolatrous customs were *an abomination to the Lord*, and the translating of them into his worship, would make even that an abomination, and an affront to him by which they should give him honour, and by which they hoped to obtain his favour. The case is bad indeed when the sacrifice itself is become an abomination, Prov. xv. 8. He therefore concludes, ver. 32. with the same caution concerning the worship of God, which he had before given concerning the word of God, (chap. iv. 2.) *Ye shall not add thereto any invention of your own, under pretence of making the ordinance either more significant, or more magnificent; nor diminish from it, under pretence of making it more easy and practicable, or of setting aside that which may be spared, but observe to do all that, and that only which God has commanded*. We may then hope in our religious worship to obtain the divine acceptance, when we observe the divine appointment. God will have his own work done in his own way.

C H A P. XIII.

Moses is still upon that necessary subject, concerning the peril of idolatry. In the close of the foregoing chapter he had cautioned them against the peril that might arise from their predecessors the Canaanites. In this chapter he cautions them against the rise of idolatry from among themselves; they must take heed lest any shall draw them to idolatry. (1.) By the pretence of prophecy, ver. 1—5. (2.) By the pretence of friendship and relation, ver. 6—11.

6—11. (3.) By the pretence of numbers, ver. 12—18. But in all these cases the temptation must be resolutely resisted, and the tempters punished and cut off.

1. IF there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, 2. And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods (which thou hast not known) and let us serve them; 3. Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. 4. Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and you shall serve him, and cleave unto him. 5. And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death (because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in) so shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee.

Here is, 1. A very strange supposition, ver. 1, 2. (1.) It is strange that there should arise any among themselves, especially any pretending to vision and prophecy, that should move them to go and serve other gods. Was it possible that any who had so much knowledge of the methods of divine revelation, as to be able to personate a prophet, should yet have so little knowledge of the divine nature and will, as to go himself, and entice his neighbours after other gods? Could an Israelite ever be guilty of such impiety? Could a man of sense ever be guilty of such absurdity? We see it in our own day, and therefore may think it the less strange; multitudes that profess both learning and religion, yet exciting both themselves and others, not only to worship God by images, but to give divine honour to saints and angels, which is no better than going after other gods to serve them; such is the power of strong delusions. (2.) It is yet more strange that the sign or wonder given for the confirmation of this false doctrine should come to pass. Can it be thought that God himself should give any countenance to such a vile motion? Did ever a false prophet work a true miracle? It is only supposed here for two reasons, (1.) To strengthen the caution here given against hearkning to such a one. Tho' it were possible that he should work a true miracle, yet you must not believe him if he tells you, you must serve other gods, for the divine law against that is certainly perpetual and unalterable. The supposition is like that, Gal. i. 8. If we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you, which doth not prove it possible that an angel should preach another gospel, but strongly expresseth the certainty and perpetuity of that which we have received. So here, (2.) It is to fortify them against the danger of impostures, and lying wonders, (2 Thes. ii. 9.) Suppose the credentials he produceth be so artfully counterfeited, that you cannot discern the cheat, nor disprove them, yet if they be intended to draw you to the service of other gods, that alone is sufficient to disprove them; no evidence can be admitted against so clear a truth as that of the unity of the Godhead, and so plain a law, as that of worshipping the one only living and true God. We cannot suppose that the God of truth should set his seal of miracles to a lie, to so gross a lie as is supposed in that temptation, Let us go after other gods. But if it be asked, why this false prophet is permitted to counterfeit this broad-seal? it is answered here, ver. 3. The Lord your God proveth you. He suffers you to be set upon by such a temptation, to try your constancy, that both they that are perfect, and they that are false and corrupt may be made manifest. It is to prove you, therefore see that you acquit yourselves in the trial, and stand your ground.

2. Here is a very necessary charge given in this case. 1. Not to yield to the temptation, ver. 3. Thou shalt not hearken to the words of that prophet. Not only thou shalt not do the thing he tempts thee to, but thou shalt not so much as patiently hear the temptation, but reject it with the utmost disdain and detestation. Such a suggestion as this is not to be so much as parleyed with, but the ear must be stopped against it; Get thee behind me, Satan: some temptations are so grossly vile that they will not bear a debate, nor may we so much as give them the hearing. What follows, ver. 4. Ye shall walk after the Lord, may be looked upon, 1. As prescribing a preservative from the temptation; keep close to your duty and you keep out of harm's way. God never leaves us till we leave him. Or, 2. As furnishing us with an answer to the temptation; say, It is written, Thou shalt walk after the Lord, and cleave unto him, and therefore what have I to do with idols?

2. Not to spare the tempter, ver. 5. That prophet shall be put to death, both to punish him for the attempt he hath made, the seducer must die, tho' none were seduced by him. A design upon the crown is treason; and to prevent his doing further mischief. This is called putting away the evil. There is no way of removing the

guilt but by removing the guilty; if such a criminal be not punished, they that should do it make themselves responsible. And thus the mischief must be put away; the infection must be kept from spreading, by cutting off the gangrened limb, and putting away the mischief-makers. Such dangerous diseases as these must be taken in time.

6. ¶ If thy brother the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods (which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; 7. Namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth) 8. Thou shalt not consent unto him nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him. 9. But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. 10. And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die: because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. 11. And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is, among you.

Further provision is made by this branch of the statute, against receiving the infection of idolatry from those that are near and dear to us.

1. It is the policy of the tempter to send his solicitations by the hand of those we love, whom we least suspect of any ill design upon us, and whom we are desirous to please, and apt to conform ourselves to. The enticement here is supposed to come from a brother or child, that are near by nature; from a wife or friend that are near by choice; and are to us as our own souls, ver. 6. Satan tempted Adam by Eve, and Christ by Peter. We are therefore concerned to stand upon our guard against an ill proposal, when the person that proposeth it can pretend to an interest in us, that we may never sin against God in complement to the best friend we have in the world. The temptation is supposed to be private, he will intice thee secretly, implying that idolatry is a work of darkness, which dreads the light, and covets to be concealed; and which the sinner promiseth himself, and the tempter promiseth him secrecy and security in. Concerning the false gods proposed to be served, (1.) The tempter suggests, that the worshipping of these gods was the common practice of the world; and if they limited their adorations to an invisible deity, they were singular, and like no body, for they were the gods of the people round about them, and indeed of all the nations of the earth, ver. 7. This suggestion draws many away from religion and godliness, that it is an unfashionable thing, and they make their court to the world, and the flesh, because these are the gods of the people that are round about them. (2.) Moses suggests, in opposition to this, that it had not been the practice of their ancestors; they are gods which thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers. Those that are born of godly parents and have been educated in pious exercises, when they are enticed to a vain, loose, careless way of living, should remember that those are ways which they have not known, they and their fathers. And will they thus degenerate?

2. It is our duty to prefer God and religion before the best friends we have in the world. 1. We must not, in complaisance to our friends, break God's law, ver. 8. Thou shalt not consent to him, not go with him to his idolatrous worship, no not for company, or curiosity, or to gain a better interest in his affections. It is a general rule, If sinners entice thee, consent thou not. Prov. i. 10. 2. We must not in compassion to our friends obstruct the course of God's justice. He that offers such a thing, must not only be looked upon as an enemy, or dangerous person, whom one would be afraid of, and swear the peace upon, but as a criminal or traitor, whom, in zeal for our sovereign lord, his crown and dignity, we are bound to inform against, and cannot conceal without incurring the guilt of a great misprision, ver. 9. Thou shalt surely kill him. By this law the persons enticed were bound to prosecute the seducer, and to give evidence against him before the proper judges, that he might suffer the penalty of the law, and that without delay, which the Jews say is here intended in that phrase, as it is in the Hebrew, killing thou shalt kill him; neither the prosecution nor the execution must be deferred, and he that was first in the former must be first in the latter, to shew that he stood to his testimony, Thy hand shall be first upon him; to mark him out as an anathema, and then, the hands of all the people to put him away as an accursed thing. The death he must die was that, which was looked upon among the Jews as the severest of all other. He must be stoned; and his accusation written is, that he has sought to thrust thee away, by a kind of violence, from the Lord thy God, ver. 10. Those are certainly our worst enemies that would thrust us from God our best friend; and

and whatever draws us to sin separates between us and God, it is a design upon our life, and to be repented accordingly. And, lastly, here is the good effect of this necessary execution, *ver. 11. All Israel shall hear and fear.* They ought to hear and fear, for the punishment of crimes committed is designed in terror, for the prevention of the like. And it is to be hoped they will hear and fear, and by the severity of the punishment, especially when it is at the prosecution of a father, a brother, or a friend, will be made to conceive a horror of the sin, as exceeding sinful, and to be afraid of incurring the like punishments themselves. Smite the scorner that sins presumptuously, and the simple that is in danger of sinning carelessly will beware.

12. ¶ If thou shalt hear say in one of the cities, which the LORD thy God hath given thee to dwell there, saying; 13. Certain men, the children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods (which ye have not known.) 14. Then shalt thou enquire and make search, and ask diligently: and behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought among you: 15. Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword. 16. And thou shalt gather all the spoil of it into the midst of the street thereof, and shalt burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof every whit, for the LORD thy God: and it shall be an heap for ever, it shall not be built again. 17. And there shall cleave nought of the cursed thing to thine hand: that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of his anger, and shew thee mercy, and have compassion upon thee, and multiply thee, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers; 18. When thou shalt hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep all his commandments which I command thee this day, to do that which is right in the eyes of the LORD thy God.

Here the case is put of a city revolting from its allegiance to the God of Israel, and serving other gods;

1. The crime is supposed to be committed, (1.) By one of the cities of Israel, that lay within the jurisdiction of their courts; the church then judged them only that were within, 1 Cor. v. 12, 13. And even when they were ordered to preserve their religion in the first principles of it, by fire and sword, yet they were not allowed by fire and sword to propagate it. They that are born within the allegiance of a prince, if they take up arms against him are dealt with as traitors, but foreign invaders are not so. The city that is here become idolatrous is supposed formerly to have worshipped the true God, but now to be withdrawn to other gods, which intimates how great the crime is, and how sore the punishment will be of those, that after they have known the way of righteousness turn aside from it, 2 Pet. ii. 21. (2.) It is supposed to be committed by the generality of the inhabitants of the city, for we may think, that if a considerable number did retain their integrity, those only that were guilty were to be destroyed, and the city was to be spared for the sake of the righteous in it, for shall not the judge of all the earth do right? No doubt he shall. (3.) They are supposed to be drawn to idolatry by certain men the children of Belial, men that would endure no yoke, so it signifies; that neither fear God, nor regard man, but shake off all restraints of law and conscience, and are perfectly lost to all manner of virtue; these are they that say, let us serve other gods, that will not only allow, but will countenance and encourage our immoralities. Belial is put for the devil, 2 Cor. vi. 15. and the children of Belial are his children. These withdraw the inhabitants of the city; for a little of this old leaven when it is entertained, soon leavens the whole lump.

2. The cause is ordered to be tried with a great deal of care, *ver. 14. Thou shalt enquire and make search.* They must not proceed upon common fame, or take the information by hear-say, but must examine the proofs, and not give judgment against them unless the evidence was clear, and the charge fully made out. God himself before he destroyed Sodom is said to come down and see whether its crimes were according to the clamour, Gen. xviii. 21. In judicial processes it is requisite that time, and care, and pains, be taken to find out the truth, and that search be made without any passion, prejudice, or partiality. The Jewish writers say, that tho' particular persons who were idolaters might be judged by the inferior courts, the defection of a city must be tried by the great Sanhedrim; and if it appear that they are thrust away to idolatry, they send two learned men to them to admonish and reduce them. If they repent, all is well; if not, then all Israel must go up to war against them, to testify their indignation against idolatry, and to stop the spreading of the contagion.

3. If the crime were proved, and the criminals were incorrigible, the city was to be wholly destroyed. If there were a few righteous men in it, no doubt they would remove themselves and their families out of such a dangerous place, and then all the inhabitants, men, women and children must be put to the sword, *ver. 15.* all the spoil of the city, both shop-goods and the furniture of houses, must be brought into the market-place and burned, and the city itself must be laid in ashes and never built again, *ver. 16.* The soldiers are forbidden, upon pain of death, to convert any of the plunder to their own use, *ver. 17.* it was a devoted thing, and dangerous to meddle with it, as we find in the case of Achan. Now, 1. God enjoins this severity to shew what a jealous God he is in the matters of his worship, and how great a crime it is to serve other gods. Let men know that God will not give his glory to another, nor his praise to graven images. 2. He expects that magistrates having their honour and power from him, should be concerned for his honour, and use their power for terror to evil doers, else they bear the sword in vain. 3. The faithful worshippers of the true God must take all occasions to shew their just indignation against idolatry, much more against atheism, infidelity, and irreligion. 4. It is here intimated, that the best expedient for the turning away of God's anger from a land, is to execute justice upon the wicked of the land, *ver. 17.* that the Lord may turn from the fierceness of his anger, which was ready to break out against the whole nation, for the wickedness of that one apostate city. It is promised that if they would thus root wickedness out of their land, God would multiply them. They might think it impolitic, and against the interest of their nation, to ruin a whole city, for a crime relating purely to religion, and that they should be more sparing of the blood of Israelites; fear not that (saith Moses) God will multiply you the more; the body of your nation will lose nothing by the letting out of this corrupt blood. Lastly, tho' we do not find this law put in execution in all the history of the Jewish church, (Gibeah was destroyed, not for idolatry, but immorality) yet for the neglect of the execution of it upon the inferior cities, that served idols, God himself, by the army of the Chaldeans, put it in execution upon Jerusalem, the head city, which, for its apostasy from God, was utterly destroyed and laid waste, and lay in ruins seventy years. Tho' idolaters may escape the punishment from men, (nor is this law in the letter of it binding now, under the gospel) yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgments. The New Testament speaks of communion with idolaters, as a sin which above any other provokes the Lord to jealousy, and dars him as if we were stronger than he, 1 Cor. x. 21, 22.

C H A P. XIV.

Moses in this chapter teaches them, (1.) To distinguish themselves from their neighbours by a singularity, (1.) In their mourning, *ver. 1, 2.* (2.) In their meat, *ver. 3—21.* (3.) To devote themselves unto God, and in token of that to give him his due out of their estates, the yearly tithe; and that every third year, for the maintenance of their religious feasts, the Levites, and the poor, *ver. 22—29.*

1. YE are the children of the LORD your God: ye shall not cut your selves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead. 2. For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth. 3. ¶ Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing. 4. These are the beasts which ye shall eat: the ox, the sheep, and the goat, 5. The hart, and the roe-buck, and the fallow-deer, and the wild goat, and the pygarg, and the wild ox, and the chamois, 6. And every beast that parteth the hoof, and cleaveth the cleft into two claws, and cheweth the cud amongst the beasts; that ye shall eat. 7. Nevertheless, these ye shall not eat, of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the cloven hoof; as the camel, and the hare, and the coney: for they chew the cud, but divide not the hoof; therefore they are unclean unto you. 8. And the swine, because it divideth the hoof, yet cheweth not the cud, it is unclean unto you: ye shall not eat of their flesh, nor touch their dead carcase. 9. ¶ These ye shall eat of all that are in the waters: all that have fins and scales shall ye eat: 10. And whatsoever hath not fins and scales, ye may not eat: it is unclean unto you. 11. ¶ Of all clean birds ye shall eat. 12. But these are they of which ye shall not eat: the eagle, and the osprey, 13. And the glede, and the kite, and the vulture after his kind, 14. And every raven after his kind, 15. And the owl, and the night-hawk, and the cuckow, and the hawk after his kind, 16. The little

little owl, and the great owl, and the swan, 17. And the pelican, and the gier-eagle, and the cormorant, 18. And the stork, and the heron after her kind, and the lapwing, and the bat. 19. And every creeping thing that flieth, is unclean unto you: they shall not be eaten. 20. But of all clean fowls ye may eat. 21. ¶ Ye shall not eat of any thing that dieth of itself: thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayst sell it unto an alien: for thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mothers milk.

Moses here tells the people of Israel,

1. How God had dignified them, as a peculiar people, with three distinguishing privileges which were their honour, and figures of those spiritual blessings in heavenly things, with which God has in Christ blessed us. (1.) Here is *election*, the Lord hath chosen thee, ver. 2. Not for their own merit, or for any good-works foreseen, but because he would magnify the riches of his power and grace among them. He did not chuse them because they were by their own dedication and subjection a peculiar people to him, above other nations; but he chose them *that they might be so*, by his grace; and thus were believers chosen, Eph. i. 4. (2.) Here is *adoption*, ver. 1. *Ye are the children of the Lord your God*, formed by him into a people, owned by him as his people; nay, his family, a people near unto him, nearer than any other. *Israel is my son, my first-born*; not because he needed children, but because they were orphans, and needed a father. Every Israelite indeed, is a *child of God*, partaker of his nature and favour, his love and blessing: *behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us!* (3.) Here is *sanctification*, ver. 2. *Thou art a holy people*; separated and set apart for God, devoted to his service, designed for his praise, governed by a holy law, graced by a holy tabernacle, and the holy ordinances relating to it. God's people are obliged to be holy; and if they be holy, are obliged to the grace of God that makes them so. The Lord has *set them apart for himself*, and qualified them for his service, and the enjoyment of him, and so has made them *holy to himself*.

2. How they ought to distinguish themselves, by a sober singularity from all the nations that were about them. And God having thus advanced them, let not them debase themselves, by admitting the superstitious customs of idolaters, and by making themselves like them, put themselves upon the level with them. *Be ye the children of the Lord your God*; so the Seventy read it, as a command, i. e. carry yourselves as becomes the children of God, and do nothing to disgrace the honour, and forfeit the privileges of the relation.

In two things particularly, they must distinguish themselves;

1. In their mourning. *Ye shall not cut your selves*, ver. 1. That forbids, (as some think) not only their *cutting themselves* at their funerals, either to express their grief, or with their own blood to appease the infernal deities; but their wounding and mangling themselves in the worship of their gods, as Baal's prophets did, 1 Kings xviii. 28. or their marking themselves by incisions in their flesh, for such and such deities, which in them, above any, would be an inexcusable crime, who in the sign of circumcision, bore about with them in their bodies the marks of the Lord Jehovah. So that,

1. They are forbidden to deform or hurt their own bodies upon any account. Methinks, this is like a parent's charge to his little children, that are foolish, careless, and wilful, and are apt to play with knives, *Children, ye shall not cut yourselves*. This is the intention of those commands which oblige us to deny ourselves; the true meaning of them, if we understood them aright, would appear to be, *do yourselves no harm*: And this also is the design of those providences which most cross us, to remove from us those things by which we are in danger of doing our selves harm. Knives are taken from us, lest we cut our selves. They that are dedicated to God, as a holy people, must do nothing to disfigure themselves; the body is for the Lord, and is to be used accordingly.

2. They are forbidden to disturb and afflict their own minds with inordinate grief for the loss of near and dear relations. Ye shall not express or exasperate your sorrow, even upon the most mournful occasions, by cutting yourselves, and making baldness between your eyes, like men enraged, or resolvedly hardened in sorrow for the dead, as those that have no hope, 1 Thes. iv. 13. It is an excellent passage, which Mr. Ainsworth here quotes from one of the Jewish writers, who understands this as a law against immoderate grief for the death of our relations. *If your father (for instance) die, you shall not cut yourselves*, that is, *you shall not sorrow more than is meet, for you are not fatherless, you have a father, who is great, living, and permanent, even the holy, blessed God, whose children ye are*, ver. 1. But an infidel (saith he) when his father dies, hath no father that can help him in time of need; for he hath said to a stick, *thou art my father*, and to a stone, *thou hast brought me forth*, (Jer. ii. 27.) therefore he weeps, cuts himself, and makes him bald. We that have a God to hope in, and a heaven to hope for, must bear up ourselves with that hope under every burthen of this kind.

2. They must be singular in their meat. Many sorts of flesh, which were wholesome enough, and which other people did com-

monly eat; they must religiously abstain from, as unclean. This law we had before, Lev. xi. 2. where it was largely opened. It seems plainly by the coherence here, to be intended as a mark of peculiarity; for their observance of it would make them to be taken notice of in all mixt companies as a separate people, and preserve them from mingling themselves with, and conforming themselves to, their idolatrous neighbours.

1. Concerning beasts, here is a more particular enumeration of those which they were allowed to eat, than was in Leviticus, to shew that they had no reason to complain of their being restrained from eating swine's flesh, and hares, and rabbits (which were all that were then forbidden, but are now commonly used) when they were allowed so great a variety, not only of that which we call butchers meat, ver. 4. which alone was offered in sacrifice, but of venison, which they had great plenty of in Canaan, *the hart, and the roe-buck, and the fallow-deer*, ver. 5. which, tho' never brought to God's altar, was allowed them at their own table. See chap. xii. 22. When of all these, (as Adam of every tree of the garden) they might freely eat, those were inexcusable, who to gratify a perverse appetite, or (as should seem) in honour of their idols, and in participation of their idolatrous sacrifices, *eat swines flesh, and broth of abominable things* (made so by this law) *was in their vessels*, Isa. lxv. 4.

2. Concerning fish there is only one general rule given, that whatsoever had not fins and scales, (as shell-fish, and eels, besides leeches, and other animals in the water, that are not proper food) was *unclean, and forbidden*, ver. 9, 10.

3. No general rule is given concerning fowl, but those particularly mentioned, that were to be unclean to them, and there are few or none of them which are here forbidden, that are now commonly eaten; and whatsoever is not expressly forbidden, is allowed, ver. 11—20. *Of all clean fowls you may eat*.

They are farther forbidden (1.) To eat the flesh of any creature that died of itself, because the blood was not separated from it, and besides the ceremonial uncleanness it lay under, from Lev. xi. 39. it is not wholesome food, nor ordinarily used among us, except by the poor. And (2.) To *seethe a kid in its mother's milk*, either to gratify their own luxury, supposing it a dainty bit, or in conformity to some superstitious custom of the heathen. The Chaldee paraphrasts read it, *Thou shalt not eat flesh-meats, and milk-meats together*. And so it would forbid the use of butter, as sauce to any flesh. Now as to all these precepts concerning their food, (1.) It is plain in the law itself, that they belonged only to the Jews, and were not moral, nor of perpetual use, because not of universal obligation; for what they might not eat themselves, they might give to a stranger, a profelyte of the gate, that had renounced idolatry, and therefore was permitted to live among them, tho' not circumcised; or, they might sell to an alien, a mere Gentile, that came into their country for trade, but might not settle in it, ver. 21. They might feed upon that which an Israelite might not touch; which is a plain instance of their peculiarity, and their being a holy people. It is plain in the gospel, that they are now antiquated and repealed: For every creature of God is good, and nothing now to be refused, or called common and unclean, 1 Tim. iv. 4.

22. Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year. 23. And thou shalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oyl, and the firstlings of thy herds, and of thy flocks: that thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always. 24. And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it, or if the place be too far from thee, which the LORD thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the LORD thy God hath blessed thee: 25. Then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose. 26. And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou and thine household. 27. And the Levite that is within thy gates, thou shalt not forsake him: for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee. 28. ¶ At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates. 29. And the Levite (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest.

We have here a part of the statute concerning tithes: The products of their ground were twice tilled, so that putting both together,

and whatever draws us to sin separates between us and God, it is a design upon our life, and to be resented accordingly. And, lastly, here is the good effect of this necessary execution, *ver. 11. All Israel shall hear and fear. They ought to hear and fear,* for the punishment of crimes committed is designed *in terror*, for the prevention of the like. And it is to be hoped they will hear and fear, and by the severity of the punishment, especially when it is at the prosecution of a father, a brother, or a friend, will be made to conceive a horror of the sin, as exceeding sinful, and to be afraid of incurring the like punishments themselves. Smite the scorner that sins presumptuously, and the simple that is in danger of sinning carelessly will beware.

12. ¶ If thou shalt hear *say* in one of the cities, which the LORD thy God hath given thee to dwell there, saying, 13. *Certain men, the children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods (which ye have not known.)* 14. Then shalt thou enquire and make search, and ask diligently: and behold, *if it be truth, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought among you:* 15. Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword. 16. And thou shalt gather all the spoil of it into the midst of the street thereof, and shalt burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof every whit, for the LORD thy God: and it shall be an heap for ever, it shall not be built again. 17. And there shall cleave nought of the cursed thing to thine hand: that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of his anger, and shew thee mercy, and have compassion upon thee, and multiply thee, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers; 18. When thou shalt hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep all his commandments which I command thee this day, to do *that which is right in the eyes of the LORD thy God.*

Here the case is put of a city revolting from its allegiance to the God of Israel, *and serving other gods;*

1. The crime is supposed to be committed, (1.) By one of the cities of Israel, that lay within the jurisdiction of their courts; the church then *judged them only that were within,* 1 Cor. v. 12, 13. And even when they were ordered to preserve their religion in the first principles of it, by fire and sword, yet they were not allowed by fire and sword to propagate it. They that are born within the allegiance of a prince, if they take up arms against him are dealt with as traitors, but foreign invaders are not so. The city that is here become idolatrous is supposed formerly to have worshipped the true God, but now to be withdrawn to other gods, which intimates how great the crime is, and how sore the punishment will be of those, that *after they have known the way of righteousness turn aside from it,* 2 Pet. ii. 21. (2.) It is supposed to be committed by the generality of the inhabitants of the city, for we may think, that if a considerable number did retain their integrity, those only that were guilty were to be destroyed, and the city was to be spared for the sake of the righteous in it, for *shall not the judge of all the earth do right?* No doubt he shall. (3.) They are supposed to be drawn to idolatry by *certain men the children of Belial,* men that would endure no yoke, so it signifies; that neither fear God, nor regard man, but shake off all restraints of law and conscience, and are perfectly lost to all manner of virtue; these are they that say, let us serve other gods, that will not only allow, but will countenance and encourage our immoralities. Belial is put for *the devil,* 2 Cor. vi. 15. and the children of Belial are his children. These withdraw the inhabitants of the city; for a little of this old leaven when it is entertained, soon leavens the whole lump.

2. The cause is ordered to be tried with a great deal of care, *ver. 14. Thou shalt enquire and make search.* They must not proceed upon common fame, or take the information by hear-say, but must examine the proofs, and not give judgment against them unless the evidence was clear, and the charge fully made out. God himself before he destroyed Sodom is said to come down and see whether its crimes were according to the clamour, *Gen. xviii. 21.* In judicial processes it is requisite that time, and care, and pains, be taken to find out the truth, and that search be made without any passion, prejudice, or partiality. The Jewish writers say, that tho' particular persons who were idolaters might be judged by the inferior courts, the defecation of a city must be tried by the great Sanhedrim; and if it appear that they are thrust away to idolatry, they send two learned men to them to admonish and reduce them. If they repent, all is well; if not, then all Israel must go up to war against them, to testify their indignation against idolatry, and to stop the spreading of the contagion.

3. If the crime were proved, and the criminals were incorrigible, the city was to be wholly destroyed. If there were a few righteous men in it, no doubt they would remove themselves and their families out of such a dangerous place, and then all the inhabitants, men, women and children must be put to the sword, *ver. 15.* all the spoil of the city, both shop-goods and the furniture of houses, must be brought into the market-place and burned, and the city it self must be laid in ashes and never built again, *ver. 16.* The soldiers are forbidden, upon pain of death, to convert any of the plunder to their own use, *ver. 17.* it was a devoted thing, and dangerous to meddle with it, as we find in the case of Achan. Now, 1. God enjoins this severity to shew what a jealous God he is in the matters of his worship, and how great a crime it is to serve other gods. Let men know that God will not give his glory to another, nor his praise to graven images. 2. He expects that magistrates having their honour and power from him, should be concerned for his honour, and use their power for *terror to evil doers, else they bear the sword in vain.* 3. The faithful worshippers of the true God must take all occasions to shew their just indignation against idolatry, much more against atheism, infidelity, and irreligion. 4. It is here intimated, that the best expedient for the turning away of God's anger from a land, is to execute justice upon the *wicked of the land,* *ver. 17.* that the Lord may *turn from the fierceness of his anger,* which was ready to break out against the whole nation, for the wickedness of that one apostate city. It is promised that if they would thus root wickedness out of their land, God would multiply them. They might think it impolitic, and against the interest of their nation, to ruin a whole city, for a crime relating purely to religion, and that they should be more sparing of the blood of Israelites; fear not that (saith Moses) God will multiply you the more; the body of your nation will lose nothing by the letting out of this corrupt blood. Lastly, tho' we do not find this law put in execution in all the history of the Jewish church, (Gibeah was destroyed, not for idolatry, but immorality) yet for the neglect of the execution of it upon the inferior cities, that served idols, God himself, by the army of the Chaldeans, put it in execution upon Jerusalem, the head city, which, for its apostasy from God, was utterly destroyed and laid waste, and lay in ruins seventy years. Tho' idolaters may escape the punishment from men, (nor is this law in the letter of it binding now, under the gospel) yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgments. The New Testament speaks of communion with idolaters, as a sin which above any other *provokes the Lord to jealousy,* and dares him as if we were *stronger than he,* 1 Cor. x. 21, 22.

CHAP. XIV.

Moses in this chapter teaches them, (1.) To distinguish themselves from their neighbours by a singularity, (1.) In their mourning, *ver. 1, 2,* (2.) In their meat, *ver. 3—21.* (3.) To devote themselves unto God, and in token of that to give him his dues out of their estates, the yearly tithe; and that every third year, for the maintenance of their religious feasts, the Levites, and the poor, *ver. 22—29.*

1. YE are the children of the LORD your God: ye shall not cut your selves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead. 2. For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth. 3. ¶ Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing. 4. These are the beasts which ye shall eat: the ox, the sheep, and the goat, 5. The hart, and the roe-buck, and the fallow-deer, and the wild goat, and the pygarg, and the wild ox, and the chamois, 6. And every beast that parteth the hoof, and cleaveth the cleft into two claws, and cheweth the cud amongst the beasts; that ye shall eat. 7. Nevertheless, these ye shall not eat, of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the cloven hoof; as the camel, and the hare, and the coney: for they chew the cud, but divide not the hoof; therefore they are unclean unto you. 8. And the swine, because it divideth the hoof, yet cheweth not the cud, it is unclean unto you: ye shall not eat of their flesh, nor touch their dead carcase. 9. ¶ These ye shall eat of all that are in the waters: all that have fins and scales shall ye eat: 10. And whatsoever hath not fins and scales, ye may not eat: it is unclean unto you. 11. ¶ Of all clean birds ye shall eat. 12. But these are they of which ye shall not eat: the eagle, and the osprey, and the ospry, 13. And the glede, and the kite, and the vulture after his kind, 14. And every raven after his kind, 15. And the owl, and the night-hawk, and the cuckow, and the hawk after his kind, 16. The little

little owl, and the great owl, and the swan, 17. And the pelican, and the gier-eagle, and the cormorant, 18. And the stork, and the heron after her kind, and the lapwing, and the bat. 19. And every creeping thing that dieth, is unclean unto you: they shall not be eaten. 20. But of all clean fowls ye may eat. 21. ¶ Ye shall not eat of any thing that dieth of itself: thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayst sell it unto an alien: for thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not see the a kid in his mother's milk.

Moses here tells the people of Israel,

1. How God had dignified them, as a peculiar people, with three distinguishing privileges which were their honour, and figures of those spiritual blessings in heavenly things, with which God has in Christ blessed us. (1.) Here is *election*, the Lord hath chosen thee, ver. 2. Not for their own merit, or for any good-works foreseen, but because he would magnify the riches of his power and grace among them. He did not chuse them because they were by their own dedication and subjection a peculiar people to him, above other nations; but he chose them that they might be so, by his grace; and thus were believers chosen, *Eph. i. 4.* (2.) Here is *adoption*, ver. 1. *Ye are the children of the Lord your God*, formed by him into a people, owned by him as his people; nay, his family, a people near unto him, nearer than any other. *Israel is my son, my first-born*; not because he needed children, but because they were orphans, and needed a father. Every Israelite indeed, is a *child of God*, partaker of his nature and favour, his love and blessing: *behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us!* (3.) Here is *sanctification*, ver. 2. *Thou art a holy people*; separated and set apart for God, devoted to his service, designed for his praise, governed by a holy law, graced by a holy tabernacle, and the holy ordinances relating to it. God's people are obliged to be holy; and if they be holy, are obliged to the grace of God that makes them so. The Lord has set them apart for himself, and qualified them for his service, and the enjoyment of him, and so has made them *holy to himself*.

2. How they ought to distinguish themselves, by a sober singularity from all the nations that were about them. And God having thus advanced them, let not them debase themselves, by admitting the superstitious customs of idolaters, and by making themselves like them, put themselves upon the level with them. *Be ye the children of the Lord your God*; so the Seventy read it, as a command, *i. e.* carry yourselves as becomes the children of God, and do nothing to disgrace the honour, and forfeit the privileges of the relation.

In two things particularly, they must distinguish themselves;

1. In their mourning. *Ye shall not cut your selves*, ver. 1. That forbids, (as some think) not only their cutting themselves at their funerals, either to express their grief, or with their own blood to appease the infernal deities; but their wounding and mangling themselves in the worship of their gods, as Baal's prophets did, *1 Kings xviii. 28.* or their marking themselves by incisions in their flesh, for such and such deities, which in them, above any, would be an inexcusable crime, who in the sign of circumcision, bore about with them in their bodies the marks of the Lord Jehovah. So that,

1. They are forbidden to deform or hurt their own bodies upon any account. Methinks, this is like a parent's charge to his little children, that are foolish, careless, and wilful, and are apt to play with knives, *Children, ye shall not cut yourselves*. This is the intention of those commands which oblige us to deny ourselves; the true meaning of them, if we understood them aright, would appear to be, *do yourselves no harm*: And this also is the design of those providences which most cross us, to remove from us those things by which we are in danger of doing our selves harm. Knives are taken from us, lest we cut our selves. They that are dedicated to God, as a holy people, must do nothing to disfigure themselves; the body is for the Lord, and is to be used accordingly.

2. They are forbidden to disturb and afflict their own minds with inordinate grief for the loss of near and dear relations. Ye shall not express or exasperate your sorrow, even upon the most mournful occasions, by cutting yourselves, and making baldness between your eyes, like men enraged, or resolvedly hardened in sorrow for the dead, as those that have no hope, *1 Thes. iv. 13.* It is an excellent passage, which Mr. Ainsworth here quotes from one of the Jewish writers, who understands this as a law against immoderate grief for the death of our relations. *If your father (for instance) die, you shall not cut yourselves*, that is, *you shall not sorrow more than is meet, for you are not fatherless, you have a father, who is great, living, and permanent, even the holy, blessed God, whose children ye are*, ver. 1. But an infidel (saith he) when his father dies, hath no father that can help him in time of need; for he hath said to a flock, *thou art my father, and to a stone, thou hast brought me forth*, (*Jer. ii. 27.*) therefore he weeps, cuts himself, and makes him bald. We that have a God to hope in, and a heaven to hope for, must bear up ourselves with that hope under every burthen of this kind.

2. They must be singular in their meat. Many sorts of flesh, which were wholesome enough, and which other people did com-

monly eat, they must religiously abstain from, as unclean. This law we had before, *Lev. xi. 2.* where it was largely opened. It seems plainly by the coherence here, to be intended as a mark of peculiarity; for their observance of it would make them to be taken notice of in all mixt companies as a separate people, and preserve them from mingling themselves with, and conforming themselves to, their idolatrous neighbours.

1. Concerning beasts, here is a more particular enumeration of those which they were allowed to eat, than was in Leviticus, to shew that they had no reason to complain of their being restrained from eating swine's flesh, and hares, and rabbits (which were all that were then forbidden, but are now commonly used) when they were allowed so great a variety, not only of that which we call butchers meat, ver. 4. which alone was offered in sacrifice, but of venison, which they had great plenty of in Canaan, *the hart, and the roe-buck, and the fallow-deer*, ver. 5. which, tho' never brought to God's altar, was allowed them at their own table. See chap. xii. 22. When of all these, (as Adam of every tree of the garden) they might freely eat, those were inexcusable, who to gratify a perverse appetite, or (as should seem) in honour of their idols, and in participation of their idolatrous sacrifices, eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things (made so by this law) was in their vessels, *Isa. lxxv. 4.*

2. Concerning fish there is only one general rule given, that whatsoever had not fins and scales, (as shell-fish, and eels, besides leeches, and other animals in the water, that are not proper food) was unclean, and forbidden, ver. 9, 10.

3. No general rule is given concerning fowl, but those particularly mentioned, that were to be unclean to them, and there are few or none of them which are here forbidden, that are now commonly eaten; and whatsoever is not expressly forbidden, is allowed, ver. 11—20. *Of all clean fowls you may eat.*

They are farther forbidden (1.) To eat the flesh of any creature that died of itself, because the blood was not separated from it, and besides the ceremonial uncleanness it lay under, from *Lev. xi. 39.* it is not wholesome food, nor ordinarily used among us, except by the poor. And (2.) To see the a kid in its mother's milk, either to gratify their own luxury, supposing it a dainty bit, or in conformity to some superstitious custom of the heathen. The Chaldees paraphrasts read it, *Thou shalt not eat flesh-meats, and milk-meats together*. And so it would forbid the use of butter, as sauce to any flesh. Now as to all these precepts concerning their food, (1.) It is plain in the law itself, that they belonged only to the Jews, and were not moral, nor of perpetual use, because not of universal obligation; for what they might not eat themselves, they might give to a stranger, a proselyte of the gate, that had renounced idolatry, and therefore was permitted to live among them, tho' not circumcised; or, they might sell to an alien, a mere Gentile, that came into their country for trade, but might not settle in it, ver. 21. They might feed upon that which an Israelite might not touch; which is a plain instance of their peculiarity, and their being a holy people. It is plain in the gospel, that they are now antiquated and repealed: For every creature of God is good, and nothing now to be refused, or called common and unclean, *1 Tim. iv. 4.*

22. Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed; that the field bringeth forth year by year. 23. And thou shalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oyl, and the firstlings of thy herds, and of thy flocks: that thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always. 24. And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it, or if the place be too far from thee, which the LORD thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the LORD thy God hath blessed thee: 25. Then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose. 26. And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoyce, thou and thine household. 27. And the Levite that is within thy gates, thou shalt not forsake him: for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee. 28. ¶ At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates. 29. And the Levite (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest.

We have here a part of the statute concerning tithes: The products of their ground were twice tilled, so that putting both together,

together, a fifth part was devoted to God out of their increase, and only four parts of five were for their own common use; and they could not but own they sat upon an easy rent, especially, since God's part was disposed of to their own benefit and advantage. The first tithe, was for the maintenance of their Levites, who taught them the good knowledge of God, and ministered to them in holy things, this is supposed as anciently due, and is entailed upon the Levites as an inheritance, by that law, *Numb. xviii. 24, &c.* But it is the second tithe that is here spoken of, which was to be taken out of the remainder, when the Levites had had theirs.

1. They are here charged to separate it, and set it apart for God, *ver. 22. Thou shalt tithe all the increase of the seed.* The Levites took care of their own, but the separating of this was left to the owners themselves; the law encouraging them to be honest, by reposing a confidence in them, and so trying their fear of God. They are bid to tithe truly, *i. e.* to be sure to do it, and to do it faithfully, and carefully, that God's part might not be diminished either with design, or by oversight. Note, We must be sure to give God his full dues out of our estates, for being but stewards of them, it is required that we be faithful, as those that must give account.

2. They are here directed how to dispose of it, when they had separated it. Let every man lay by as God prospers him, and gives him success, and then let him lay out in pious uses as God gives him opportunity; and it will be the easier to lay out, and the proportion more satisfying, when first we have laid by. This second tithe may be disposed of, 1. In works of piety, for the two first years after the year of release. They must bring it up, either in kind, or the full value of it, to the place of the sanctuary, and there must spend it in holy feasting before the Lord. If they could do it with any convenience, they must bring it in kind, *ver. 23.* But if not, they might turn it into money, *ver. 24, 25.* and that money must be laid out in something to feast upon before the Lord. The comfortable cheerful using of what God hath given us with temperance and sobriety, is really the honouring of God with it. Contentment, holy joy, and thankfulness, make every meal a religious feast. The end of this law we have, *ver. 23. That thou mayst learn to fear the Lord thy God always;* it was to keep them right and firm to their religion, (1.) By acquainting them with the sanctuary, the holy things, and the solemn services that were there performed; what they read the appointment of in their bibles, it would do them good to see the observance of in the tabernacle; it would make a deeper impression upon them, which would keep them out of the snares of the idolatrous customs. Note, It will have a good influence upon our constancy in religion, *never to forsake the assembling of our selves together,* Heb. x. 25. By the comfort of the communion of saints, we may be kept to our communion with God. (2.) By using them to the most pleasant and delightful services of religion. Let them *rejoice before the Lord, that they may learn to fear him always.* The more pleasure we find in the ways of religion, the more likely we shall be to persevere in those ways. One thing they must remember in their pious entertainments, to bid their Levites welcome to them. Thou shalt not *forsake the Levite,* *ver. 27.* Let him never be a stranger to thy table, especially when thou eatest before the Lord.

2. Every third year this tithe must be disposed of at home in works of charity, *ver. 28, 29. Lay it up within thy own gates,* and let it be given to the poor; who knowing the provision this law had made for them no doubt would come to seek it; and that they might make the poor familiar to them, and not disdain their company, they are here directed to welcome them to their houses; thither let them come, and eat and be satisfied. In this charitable distribution of the second tithe, they must have an eye to the poor ministers, and add to their encouragement by entertaining them, next to poor strangers, not only for the supply of their necessities, but to put a respect upon them, and so to invite them to turn proselytes; and next to the fatherless and widow, who tho' perhaps they may have a competent maintenance left them, yet cannot be supposed to live so plentifully and comfortably as they had done in months past, and therefore countenance them, and help to make them easy by inviting them to this entertainment. God has a particular care for widows and fatherless, and he requires that we should have so too. It is his honour and will be ours to help the helpless. And if we thus serve God and do good with what we have, it is promised here, that the Lord our God will *bless us in all the work of our hand.* Note, 1. The blessing of God is all in all to our outward prosperity, and without that blessing the work of our hands which we do will bring nothing to pass. 2. The way to obtain that blessing is to be diligent and charitable. The blessing descends upon the working hand; expect not that God should bless thee in thy idleness, and love of ease, but in all the work of thy hand: It is the hand of the diligent with the blessing of God upon it that makes rich, *Prov. x. 4, 22.* And it descends upon the giving hand; he that thus scatters certainly increases; and the liberal soul will be made fat. It is an undoubted truth, tho' little believed, that to be charitable to the poor, and to be free and generous in the support of religion, and any good work is the surest and safest way of thriving. *What is lent to the Lord will be repaid with abundant interest,* Ezek. xlv. 30.

CHAP. XV.

In this chapter Moses gives orders (1.) Concerning the release of debts every seventh year, *ver. 1—6.* with a caution that that be no hindrance to charitable lending, *ver. 7—11.* (2.) Concerning the release of servants, after seven years service, *ver. 12—18.* (3.) Concerning the sanctification of the firstlings of cattle to God, *ver. 19—23.*

1. **A**T the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release. 2. And this is the manner of the release: Every creditor that lendeth *ought* unto his neighbour, shall release it, he shall not exact it of his neighbour, or of his brother, because it is called the LORD's release. 3. Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it again: but *that* which is thine with thy brother, thine hand shall release: 4. Save when there shall be no poor among you: for the LORD shall greatly bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it: 5. Only if thou carefully hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all these commandments which I command thee this day. 6. For the LORD thy God blest thee, as he promised thee, and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee. 7. ¶ If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren, within any of thy gates, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: 8. But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend unto him sufficient for his need, *in that* which he wanteth. 9. Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release is at hand: and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought, and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee. 10. Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. 11. For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.

Here is, (1.) A law for the relief of poor debtors, such (we may suppose) as were insolvent. Every seventh year was a year of release, in which the ground rested from being tilled, servants were discharged from their services; and among other acts of grace, this was one, that they that had borrowed money, and had not been able to pay it before, should this year be released from it; and tho' if they were able, they were afterwards bound in conscience to repay it, yet from thenceforth the creditor should never recover it by law. Many good expositors think it only forbids the exacting of the debt in the year of release, because no harvest being gathered in that year, it could not be expected that men should pay their debts then, but that afterwards it might be sued for, and recovered: so that the release did not extinguish the debt, but only stay the process for a time. But others think it was a release of the debt for ever; and that seems more probable; yet under certain limitations expressed, or implied. It is supposed, that the debtor was an Israelite, *ver. 3.* an alien could not take the benefit of this law: and that he was poor, *ver. 4.* that he did not borrow for trade or purchase, but for the subsistence of his family; and that now he could not pay it without reducing himself to poverty, and coming under a necessity of seeking relief in other countries, which might be his temptation to revolt from God. The law is not that the creditor shall not receive the debt, if the debtor, or his friends for him, can pay it; but he shall not exact it, by a legal process. The reasons of this law are, (1.) To put an honour upon the sabbatical year, *because it is called the Lord's release,* *ver. 2.* That was God's year for their land, as the weekly sabbath was God's day for themselves, their servants and cattle; and as by the resting of their ground, so by the release of the debts, God would teach them to depend upon his providence. This year of release typified the grace of the Gospel, in which is proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord, and by which we obtain the release of our debts, that is, the pardon of our sins, and we are taught to forgive injuries, as we are, and hope to be forgiven of God. (2.) It was to prevent the falling of any Israelite into extreme poverty; so the margin reads, *ver. 4. To the end there shall be no poor among you,* none miserably and scandalously poor, to the reproach of their nation and religion; the reputation of which they ought to preserve. (3.) God's security is here given, by a divine promise, that whatever they lost by their poor debtors, it should

should be made up to them in the blessing of God upon all they had and did, *ver. 4, 5, 6.* Let them take care to do their duty, and then God would bless them with such great increase, that what they might lose by bad debts, if they generously remitted them, should not be missed, out of their stock, at the year's end. Not only *the Lord shall bless thee, ver. 4.* but he *doth bless thee, ver. 6.* It is altogether inexcusable, if God has given us abundance, so that we have not only enough, but to spare, and yet we are rigorous and severe in our demands from our poor brethren; for our abundance should be the supply of their wants, that at least there may not be such an inequality as is between two extremes, *2 Cor. viii. 14.* They must also consider, that their land was God's gift to them, and all their increase was the fruit of God's blessing upon them, and therefore they were bound in duty to him to use and dispose of their estates as he should order and direct them. And (lastly,) if they would remit what little sums they had lent to their poor brethren, it is promised that they should be able to lend great sums to their rich neighbours, *even to many nations, ver. 6.* and should be enriched by those loans. Thus the nations should become subject to them, and dependent on them, as *the borrower is servant to the lender, Prov. xxii. 7.* To be able to lend, and not to have need to borrow, we must look upon as a great mercy, and a good reason why we should do good with what we have, lest we provoke God to turn the scales.

2. Here is a law in favour of poor borrowers, that they might not suffer damage by the former law. Men would be apt to argue, *If the case of a man be so with his debtor,* that if the debt be not paid before the year of release it shall be lost, it were better not to lend: No, saith this branch of the statute, thou shalt not think such a thought. 1. It is taken for granted, that there would be poor among them, who would have occasion to borrow, *ver. 7.* and that there would never want some such objects of charity, *ver. 11.* *The poor shall never cease out of thy land;* tho' not such as were reduced to extreme poverty, yet such as would be behind-hand, and would have occasion to borrow; of such poor he here speaks; and such we have always with us; so that a charitable disposition may soon find a charitable occasion. 2. In such a case we are here commanded to lend or give, according as our ability, and necessity of the case is. *Thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thy hand, ver. 7.* If the hand be shut, it is a sign the heart is hardened; for *if the clouds were full of rain, they would empty themselves, Eccl. xi. 3.* Bowels of compassion would produce liberal distributions, *Jam. ii. 16.* *Thou shalt not only stretch out thy hand to him, to reach him something, but thou shalt open thy hand wide unto him, to lend him sufficient, ver. 8.* Sometimes there is as much charity in prudent lending as in giving, as it obliges the borrower to industry and honesty, and may put him into a way of helping himself. We are sometimes tempted to think, when an object of charity presents itself, we may chuse whether we will give any thing or nothing; little, or much; whereas it is here an express precept, *ver. 11.* *I command thee,* not only to give, but to *open thy hand wide,* to give liberally. 3. Here is a caveat against that objection which might arise against charitable lending, from the foregoing law for the release of debts, *ver. 9.* *Beware that there be not a thought,* a covetous ill-natured thought, *in thy Belial heart, the year of release is at hand,* and therefore I will not lend, what I must then be sure to lose, lest thy poor brother, whom thou refusest to lend to, complain to God, and it will be sin, a great sin, to thee. Note, (1.) The law is spiritual, and lays a restraint upon the thoughts of the heart. We mistake, if we think thoughts are free from the divine cognizance and check. (2.) That is a wicked heart indeed, that raiseth evil thoughts from the good law of God, as theirs did, who, because God had obliged them to the charity of forgiving, denied the charity of giving. (3.) We must carefully watch against all those secret suggestions which would divert us from our duty, or discourage us in it. Those that would keep from the act of sin must keep out of their minds the very thought of sin. (4.) When we have an occasion of charitable lending, if we cannot trust the borrower, we must trust God, and lend hoping for nothing again in this world, but expecting it will be recompensed in the resurrection of the just, *Luke vi. 35.—xiv. 14.* (5.) It is a dreadful thing to have the cry of the poor against us, for God has his ear open to that cry, and in compassion to them will be sure to reckon with those that deal hardly with them. (6.) That which we think is our prudence oft proves sin to us; he that refused to lend, because the year of release was at hand, thought he did wisely, and that men would *praise him as doing well for himself, Psal. xlix. 18.* But he is here told that he did wickedly, and God would condemn him as doing ill to his brother, and we are sure that the *judgment of God is according to truth;* and that which he saith is sin to us, will certainly be ruin to us, if it be not repented of. 4. Here is a command to give cheerfully, whatever we give in charity; *ver. 10.* *Thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest.* be not loth to part with thy money, on so good an account, nor think it lost: grudge not a kindness to thy brother; and distrust not the providence of God, as if thou shouldst want that thyself which thou givest in charity; but, on the contrary, let it be a pleasure and a satisfaction of soul to thee to think that thou art honouring God with thy substance, doing good, making thy brother easy, and laying up for thyself a good security for the time to come.

What thou doest, do freely, for God loves a cheerful giver, *2 Cor. ix. 7.* 5. Here is a promise of a recompence in this life, *for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee.* Covetous people say, giving undoes us; no, giving cheerfully in charity will enrich us, it will *fill the barns with plenty, Prov. iii. 10.* and the soul with true comfort, *Isa. lvi. 10, 11.*

12. ¶ And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years, then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. 13. And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty: 14. Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy wine-press: of that wherewith the LORD thy God hath blessed thee, thou shalt give unto him. 15. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bond-man in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day. 16. And it shall be if he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee (because he loveth thee, and thine house, because he is well with thee) 17. Then thou shalt take an aul, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever: and also unto thy maid-servant thou shalt do likewise. 18. It shall not seem hard unto thee when thou sendest him away free from thee; for he hath been worth a double hired servant to thee, in serving thee six years: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all that thou doest.

Here is, 1. A repetition of the law that had been given concerning Hebrew servants, which either had sold themselves for servants, or were sold by their parents through extreme poverty, or were sold by the court of judgment for some crime committed. The law was, (1.) That they should serve but six years, and in the seventh should go out free, *ver. 12.* Compare *Exod. xxi. 2.* And if a year of jubilee happened before he served out his time, that would be his discharge. God's Israel were a free people, and must not be compelled to perpetual slavery; thus are God's spiritual Israel called unto liberty. (2.) That if, when their six years were expired, they had no mind to go out free, but would rather continue in service, as taking less care, tho' more pains, than their masters, in that case they must lay themselves under an obligation to serve for ever, that is, for life, by having *their ears bored to the door-post, ver. 16, 17.* compare *Exod. xxi. 6.* If hereby a man disgraced himself with some as of a mean and servile spirit, that had not a due sense of the honour and pleasure of liberty; yet we may suppose, with others, he got reputation as of a quiet contented spirit, humble, and diligent, and loving, and not given to change.

2. Here is an addition to this law, requiring them to put some small stock into their servants' hands to set up with for themselves, when they sent them out of their service, *ver. 13, 14.* It was to be supposed they had nothing of their own, and that their friends had little or nothing for them, else they would have been redeemed before they were discharged by law; they had no wages for their service, and all they got by their labour was their master's, so that their liberty would do them little good, having nothing to begin the world upon, therefore they are here commanded to furnish them liberally with corn and cattle; no certain measure is prescribed, that is left to the master's generosity, who probably would have respect to the servant's merit, and necessity; but the Jewish writers say, he could not give less than the value of thirty shekels of silver, but as much more as he pleased. The maid-servants, tho' they were not to have their ears bored, if they were minded to stay, yet if they went out free, they were to have a gratuity given them, for to that those words refer, *ver. 17.* *Unto thy maid-servant thou shalt do likewise.*

The reasons for this are taken from the law of gratitude. They must do it, 1. In gratitude to God, who had not only brought them out of Egypt, (*ver. 15.*) but brought them out greatly enriched with the spoils of the Egyptians. Let not them send their servants out empty, for they were not sent empty out of the house of bondage. God's tender care of us, and kindness to us obligeth us to be careful of, and kind to those that have a dependence upon us. Thus we must render according to the benefit done unto us. 2. In gratitude to their servants, *ver. 18.* Grudge not to give him a little out of thine abundance, for *he hath been worth a double hired servant to thee.* The days of the hireling at most were but three years, *Isa. xvi. 14.* but he served thee six years, and without any wages as the hired servant hath. Masters and landlords ought to consider what need they have of, and what ease and advantage they have by, their servants and tenants, and should not only be just but kind to them. To these reasons it is added, as before in this chapter, *ver. 4, 6, 10.* *The Lord thy God shall bless thee.* Then we may expect family blessings, the springs of family prosperity, when we make conscience of our duty to our family relations.

19. ¶ All the firstling males that come of thy herd, and of thy flock, thou shalt sanctifie unto the LORD thy God: thou shalt do no work with the firstling of thy bullock, nor shear the firstling of thy sheep. 20. Thou shalt eat it before the LORD thy God year by year, in the place which the LORD shall choose, thou and thy household. 21. And if there be any blemish therein, as if it be lame, or blind, or have any ill blemish, thou shalt not sacrifice it unto the LORD thy God. 22. Thou shalt eat it within thy gates: the unclean and the clean person shall eat it alike, as the roe-buck, and as the hart. 23. Only thou shalt not eat the blood thereof: thou shalt pour it upon the ground as water.

Here is, 1. A repetition of the law concerning the firstlings of their cattle, that if they were males, they were to be sanctified to the Lord, ver. 19. in remembrance of, and in thankfulness for, the sparing of the first-born of Israel, when the first-born of the Egyptians, both of man and beast, were slain by the destroying angel, *Exod. xiii. 1, 15.* on the eighth day it was to be given to God, *Exod. xxii. 30.* and to be divided between the priest and the altar, *Numb. xviii. 17, 18.*

2. An addition to that law, for the further explication of it directing them what to do with the firstlings, (1.) That were females. Thou shalt do no work with the female firstlings of the cow, nor shear those of the sheep, ver. 19. of them the learned bishop Patrick understands it. Tho' the female firstlings were not so entirely sanctified to God, as the males, nor so early as at eight days old, yet they were not to be converted by the owners to their own use as their other cattle, but must be offered to God as peace-offerings, or used in a religious feast, at the year's end, ver. 20. Thou shalt eat it before the Lord thy God, as directed, chap. xii. 17.

(2.) But what must they do with those that were blemished, ill-blemished? ver. 21. Were it male or female, it must not be brought near the sanctuary, nor used either for sacrifice, or for holy feasting, for it would not be fit to honour God with, nor to typify Christ, who is a lamb without blemish: yet it must not be reared, but killed and eaten at their own houses as common food, ver. 22. Only they must be sure not to eat it with the blood, ver. 23. The frequent repetition of which caution intimates what need the people had of it, and what stress God laid upon it. What a mercy it is that we are not under this yoke! We are not dieted, as they were; we make no difference between a first calf, or lamb, and the rest that follow: let us therefore answer the gospel-meaning of this law, devoting ourselves and the first of our time and strength to God, as a kind of first-fruits of his creatures; and using all our comforts and enjoyments to his praise, and under the direction of his law as we have them all by his gift.

C H A P. XVI.

In this chapter we have, 1. A repetition of the laws concerning the three yearly feasts; in particular, that of the passover, ver. 1—8. That of pentecost, ver. 9—12. That of tabernacles, ver. 13—15. And the general law concerning the peoples attendance on them, ver. 16, 17. 2. The institution of an inferior magistracy, and general rules of justice given to those that were called into office, ver. 18—20. 3. A caveat against groves and images, ver. 21, 22.

1. **O**BERVE the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto the LORD thy God: for in the month of Abib the LORD thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night. 2. Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the LORD thy God, of the flock and the herd, in the place which the LORD shall choose to place his name there. 3. Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it: seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction: (for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste) that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt, all the days of thy life. 4. And there shall be no leavened bread seen with thee in all thy coasts seven days, neither shall there any thing of the flesh which thou sacrificedst the first day at even, remain all night until the morning. 5. Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any of thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee. 6. But at the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt. 7. And thou shalt rost and eat it in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose: and thou shalt turn in the morning, and go unto thy tents. 8. Six days thou

shalt eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day shalt be a solemn assembly to the LORD thy God: thou shalt do no work therein. 9. ¶ Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: begin to number the seven weeks from such time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn. 10. And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the LORD thy God, with a tribute of a free-will-offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give unto the LORD thy God, according as the LORD thy God hath blessed thee. 11. And thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are among you, in the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to place his name there. 12. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bond-man in Egypt: and thou shalt observe and do these statutes. 13. ¶ Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine. 14. And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates. 15. Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the LORD thy God, in the place which the LORD shall choose: because the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy increase, and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice. 16. ¶ Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose: in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty. 17. Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee.]

Much of the communion between God and his people Israel was kept up, and a face of religion preserved on the nation by the three yearly feasts, the institution of which, and the laws concerning them, we have several times met with already; and here they are repeated.

1. The law of the passover; so great a solemnity, that it made the whole month, in the midst of which it was placed, considerable, ver. 1. *Observe the month Abib.* Tho' one week only of that month was to be kept as a festival, yet their preparations before must be so solemn, and their reflections upon it, and improvements of it afterwards, so serious as to amount to an observation of the whole month. The month of Abib, or of new fruits, (as the Chaldee translates it) answers to our March, (or part of March, and part of April) and was by a special order from God, in remembrance of the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, made the beginning of their year, *Exod. xii. 2.* which before was reckoned to begin in September.

This month they were to keep the passover, in remembrance of their being brought out of Egypt by night, ver. 1. The Chaldee paraphrasts (because they came out of Egypt by day-light,) there being an express order that they should not stir out of their doors till morning, *Exod. xii. 22.* One of them expounds it thus, *He brought thee out of Egypt, and did wonders by night.* The other, and thou shalt eat the passover by night. The laws concerning it are, (1.) That they must be sure to sacrifice the passover in the place that God should choose, ver. 2. and in no other place, ver. 5, 6, 7. The passover was itself a sacrifice, hence Christ as our passover is said to be sacrificed for us, *1 Cor. v. 7.* and many other sacrifices were offered during the seven days of the feast, *Num. xxviii. 19, &c.* which are included here, for they are said to be sacrificed of the flock and the herd, whereas the passover itself was only of the flock, either a lamb, or a kid: now no sacrifice was accepted but from the altar that sanctified it, it was therefore necessary they should go up to the place of the altar; for tho' the paschal lamb was entirely eaten by the owners, yet it must be killed in the court, the blood sprinkled, and the inwards burned upon the altar. By confining them to the appointed place, he kept them to the appointed rule, which they would have been apt to vary from, and to introduce foolish inventions of their own, had they been permitted to offer these sacrifices within their own gates, from under the inspection of the priests. They were also hereby directed to have their eye up unto God in the solemnity, and the desire of their hearts towards the remembrance of his name, being appointed to attend there where he had chosen to place his name, ver. 2, and 6. But when the solemnity was over, they might turn and go unto their tents, ver. 7. Some think they might if they pleased return the very morning after the paschal lamb was killed and eaten, the priests and Levites being sufficient to carry on the rest of the week's work; but the first day of the seven is so far from being the day of their dispersion, that it is expressly appointed for a holy convocation, *Lev. xxiii. 7.* *Num. xxviii.*

xxviii. 18. therefore we must take it as Jonathan's paraphrase explains it, *in the morning after the end of the feast thou shalt go to thy cities.* And it was the practice to keep together the whole week, 2 Chron. xxxv. 17.

(2.) That they must eat unleavened bread for seven days, and no leavened bread must be seen in all their coats, ver. 3, 4, 8. The bread they were confined to is here called *bread of affliction*, because neither grateful to the taste, nor easy of digestion, and therefore proper to signify the heaviness of their spirits in their bondage, and to keep in remembrance the haste in which they came out, the case being so urgent that they could not stay the leavening of their bread they took with them for their march. The Jewish writers tell us, that the custom at the passover supper was, that the master of the family brake this unleavened bread, and gave to every one a piece of it, saying, *this is (i. e. this signifies, represents, or commemorates, which explains that saying of our Saviour this is my body) the bread of affliction which your fathers did eat in the land of Egypt.* The gospel meaning of this feast of unleavened bread the apostle gives us, 1 Cor. v. 8. *Christ our passover being sacrificed for us, and we having participated of the blessed fruits of that sacrifice to our comfort, let us keep the feast in a holy conversation, free from the leaven of malice towards our brethren, and hypocrisy towards God, and with the unleavened bread of sincerity and love.* Lastly, Observe concerning the passover, for what end it was instituted, *that thou mayst remember the day when thou camest forth out of Egypt*, not only on the day of the passover, or during the seven days of the feast, but *all the days of thy life*, ver. 3. as a constant inducement to obedience. Thus we celebrate the memorial of Christ's death at some times; that we may remember it at all times, as a reason why we should live to him that died for us, and rose again.

2. Seven weeks after the passover, the feast of pentecost was to be observed, concerning which they are here directed, 1. From whence to number their seven weeks, *from the time thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn*, ver. 9. i. e. from the morrow after the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, for on that day (tho' it is probable the people did not begin their harvest till the feast was ended) messengers were sent to reap a sheaf of barley, which was to be offered to God as the first fruits, Lev. xxiii. 10. Some think it implies a particular care providence would take of their land, with respect to the weather, that their harvest should be always ripe, and ready for the sickle, just at the same time. How they were to keep this feast. (1.) They must bring an offering to God, ver. 10. It is here called a *tribute of a free-will offering*. It was required of them as a *tribute* to their sovereign lord and owner, under whom they held all they had, and yet because the law did not determine the *quantum*, but it was left to every man's generosity what he would bring, and whatever he brought he must give it cheerfully, it is therefore called a *free-will offering*. It was a grateful acknowledgment of the goodness of God to them in the mercies of these corn harvests now finished, and therefore must be *according as God had blessed them*. Where God sows plentifully, he expects to reap accordingly. (2.) They must rejoice before God, ver. 11. Holy joy is the heart and soul of thankful praises, which are as the language and expression of holy joy. They must rejoice in their receivings from God, and in their returns of service and sacrifice to him; our duty must be our delight as well as our enjoyments. They must have their very servants to rejoice with them, for remember (ver. 12.) that *thou wast a bond-man*, and wouldest have been very thankful if thy taskmasters would have given thee some time and cause for rejoicing; and thy God did bring thee out to keep a feast with gladness; therefore be pleasant with thy servants and make them easy. And it should seem those general words, *thou shalt observe and do these statutes*, are added here for a particular reason, because this feast was kept in remembrance of the giving of the law upon mount Sinai, fifty days after they came out of Egypt; now the best way of expressing our thankfulness to God for his favour to us in giving us his law, is to *observe and do according to the precepts* of it.

3. They must keep the feast of tabernacles, ver. 13, 14, 15. Here is no repetition of the law concerning the sacrifices that were to be offered in great abundance at this feast, which we had at large, Num. xxix. 12, &c. because the care of these belonged to the priests and Levites who had not so much need of a repetition as the people had, and because the spiritual part of the service which consisted in holy joy, was most pleasing to God, and was to be the perpetual duty of a Gospel conversation which this feast was typical of. Observe what stress is laid upon it here, *thou shalt rejoice in thy feast*, ver. 14. and because the Lord shall bless thee, *thou shalt surely rejoice*, ver. 15. Note, 1. It is the will of God that his people should be a cheerful people. If they that were under the law must rejoice before God, much more must we that are under the grace of the Gospel, which makes it our duty not only, as here, to *rejoice in our feasts*; but to *rejoice evermore; to rejoice in the Lord always*. 2. When we rejoice in God ourselves, we should do what we can to others also to rejoice in him, by comforting the mourners, and supplying the necessities, that even the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow may rejoice with us. See Job xxix. 13. 3. We must rejoice in God not only because of what we have received, and are re-

ceiving from him daily, but because of what he hath promised, and we expect to receive yet further from him; because *he shall bless thee*, therefore *thou shalt rejoice*. Those that make God their joy may rejoice in hope, for he is faithful that has promised.

Lastly, The laws concerning the three solemn feasts are summed up, ver. 16, 17. as often before, Exod. xxiii. 16, 17. — xxxiv. 23. The general commands concerning them are, (1.) That all the males must then make their personal appearance before God, that by their frequent meeting to worship God at the same place, and by the same rule, they might be kept faithful and constant to that holy religion which was established among them. (2.) That none must appear before God empty, but every man must bring some offering or other, in token of a dependence upon God, and gratitude to him. And God was not unreasonable in his demands, let every man but give as he was able, and no more was expected. The same is still the rule of charity, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. They that give to their power, shall be accepted, but they that give beyond their power, are counted worthy of double honour, 2 Cor. viii. 3. as the poor widow that gave *all she had*; Luke xxi. 4.

18. ¶ Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates which the LORD thy God giveth thee throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment. 19. Thou shalt not wrest judgment, thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous. 20. That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayst live, and inherit the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. 21. ¶ Thou shalt not plant thee a grove of any trees near unto the altar of the LORD thy God, which thou shalt make thee. 22. Neither shalt thou set thee up any image, which the LORD thy God hateth.

Here is, 1. Care taken for the due administration of justice among them, that controversies might be determined, matters in variance adjusted, the injured righted, and the injurious punished. While they were encamped in the wilderness, they had judges and officers according to their numbers, rulers of thousands, and hundreds; Exod. xviii. 25. When they came to Canaan, they must have them according to their towns and cities, in all their gates; for the courts of judgment sat in the gates.

Now, 1. Here is, a commission given to these inferior magistrates. Judges to try and pass sentence, and officers to execute their sentences, shalt thou make thee. However the persons were pitched upon, whether by the nomination of the sovereign, or by the election of the people, *the powers were ordained of God*, Rom. xiii. 1. And it was great mercy to the people thus to have justice brought to their doors that it might be more expedite, and less expensive; a blessing we of this nation ought to be very thankful for. Pursuant to this law, besides the great Sanhedrin that sat at the sanctuary, consisting of 70 elders, and a president, there was in the larger cities, such as had in them above 120 families, a court of 23 judges; in the smaller cities, a court of 3 judges. See this law revived by Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xix. 5, 8.

2. Here is a command given to these magistrates to do justice in execution of the trust reposed in them. Better not judge at all; than not judge with just judgment; according to the direction of the law, and the evidence of the fact. The judges are here cautioned not to do wrong to any, (ver. 19.) nor to take any gifts, which would tempt them to do wrong. This law had been given before, Exod. xxiii. 8. And they are charged to do justice to all, ver. 20. *That which is altogether just shalt thou follow*. Adhere to the principles of justice; act by the rules of justice, countenance the demands of justice, imitate the patterns of justice, and pursue with resolution that which appears to be just. *Justice, justice shalt thou follow*. This is that which the magistrate is to have in his eye, on this he must be intent, and to this all personal regards must be sacrificed, to do *right to all*, and *wrong to none*.

3. Care taken for the preventing of all conformity to the idolatrous customs of the heathen, ver. 21, 22. They must not only not join with the idolaters in their worships, not visit their groves, nor bow before the images which they had set up; but (1.) They must not plant a grove, nor so much as a tree, near God's altar, lest they should make it look like the altar of the false gods. They made groves the places of their worship, either to make it secret, but that which is true and good desires the light rather; or to make it solemn; but the worship of the true God has enough in it self to make it so, and needs not the advantage of such a circumstance. (2.) They must not set up any image, statue, or pillar to the honour of God; for it is a thing which the Lord hates; nothing belies or reproaches him more, nor tends more to corrupt and debauch the minds of men, than representing and worshipping that God by an image who is an infinite and eternal Spirit.

C H A P. XVII.

The charge of this chapter is (1.) Concerning the purity and perfection of all those animals that were offered in sacrifices, ver. 1. (2.) Concerning the punishment of those that worshipped idols, ver. 2—7. (3.) Concerning appeals from the inferior courts to the great Sanhedrin, ver. 8—13. (4.) Concerning the choice and duty of a king, ver. 14—20.

1. THOU shalt not sacrifice unto the LORD thy God any bullock or sheep, wherein is blemish, or any evil-favouredness: for that is an abomination unto the LORD thy God. 2. ¶ If there be found among you within any of thy gates which the LORD thy God giveth thee, man or woman that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the LORD thy God, in transgressing his covenant, 3. And hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded; 4. And it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and enquired diligently, and behold, *it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel:* 5. Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman (which have committed that wicked thing) unto thy gates, *even* that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die. 6. At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death, be put to death; *but* at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. 7. The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people: so thou shalt put the evil away from among you.

Here is, 1. A law for preserving the honour of God's worship, by providing that no creature that had any blemish should be offered in sacrifice to him, *ver. 1.* This caveat we have often met with. *Thou shalt not sacrifice that which has any blemish, which renders it unrightly, or any evil matter, or thing,* (as the following word might better be rendered) any sickness, or weakness, tho' not discernible at first view: It is an abomination to God. God is the best of beings, and therefore whatsoever he is served with ought to be the best in its kind. And the Old Testament sacrifices in a special manner must be so, because they were types of Christ, who is a *lamb without blemish or spot,* 1 Pet. i. 9. perfectly pure from all sin, and all appearance of it. In the latter times of the Jewish church, when by the captivity in Babylon they were cured of idolatry, yet they were charged with profaneness in the breach of this law, that they *offered the blind and the lame and the sick for sacrifice,* Mal. i. 8.

2. A law for the punishing of those that worshipped false gods. It was made a capital crime to seduce others to idolatry, *chap. xiii.* here it is made no less to be seduced. If the *blind thus mislead the blind, both must fall into the ditch.* Thus God would possess them with a dread of that sin, which they must conclude exceeding sinful, when so many sanguinary laws were made against it, and would deter those from it that would not otherwise be persuaded against it: and yet the law which works death proved ineffectual.

See here, 1. What the crime was against which this law was levelled, serving or worshipping other gods, *ver. 3.* That which was the most antient and plausible idolatry is instanced in, worshipping the sun, moon, and stars, and if that were so detestable a thing, much more was it so to worship stocks and stones, or the representations of mean and contemptible animals. Of this it is said (1.) That it is what God had not commanded. He had again and again forbidden it, but it is thus expressed, to intimate that if there had been no more against it, this had been enough, for in the worship of God his institution and appointment must be our rule and warrant; and that God never commanded his worshippers to debase themselves so far as to do homage to their fellow creatures: had God commanded them to do it, they might justly have complained of it as a reproach and disparagement to them; yet when he has forbidden it, they will from a spirit of contradiction put this indignity upon themselves. (2.) That it is *wickedness in the sight of God,* *ver. 2.* Be it never so industriously concealed he sees it, and be it never so ingeniously palliated, he hates it: it is a sin in it self exceeding heinous and the highest affront that can be done to Almighty God. (3.) That it is a transgression of the covenant. It was on this condition that God took them to be his peculiar people, that they should serve and worship him only as their God, so that if they gave honour to any other which was due to him alone, the covenant was void, and all the benefit of it forfeited. Other sins were transgressions of the command, but this was a transgression of the covenant. It was spiritual adultery which breaks the marriage bond. (4.) That it is abomination in Israel, *ver. 4.* Idolatry was bad enough in any, but it was particularly abominable in Israel, a people so blessed with peculiar discoveries of the will and favour of the only true and living God.

2. How it must be tried. Upon information given of it, or any ground of suspicion that any person whatsoever, man or woman, had served other gods, (1.) Enquiry must be made, *ver. 4.* Tho' it appear not certain at first, it may afterwards upon search appear so: and if it can possibly be discovered it must not be unpunished; if not, yet the very enquiry concerning it would possess the country with a dread of it. (2.) Evidence must be given in, *ver. 6.* How heinous and dangerous soever the crime is, yet they must not punish any for it, unless there were good proof against them by two witnesses at least. They must not under pretence of honouring God wrong an innocent man. This law which requires two witnesses in case of life we had before, *Numb. xxxv. 30.* it is quoted *Matth. xviii. 16.*

3. What sentence must be passed and executed. So great a punishment as death, so great a death as stoning, must be inflicted on the idolater, be it man or woman, for the infirmity of the weaker sex would be no excuse, *ver. 5.* The place of execution must be the gate of the city, that the shame might be the greater to the criminal, and the warning the more publick to all others. The hands of the witnesses, in this as in other cases, must be first upon him, that is, they must cast the first stone at him, thereby avowing their testimony and solemnly imprecating the guilt of his blood upon themselves if their evidence were false. This custom might be of use to deter men from false witness-bearing. The witnesses are really, and therefore it was required they should be actually, the death of the malefactor. But they must be followed, and the execution compleated by the hands of all the people, who were thus to testify their detestation of the crime, and to *put the evil away from among them,* as before, *chap. xiii. 9.*

8. ¶ If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, *being* matters of controversy within thy gates: then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into the place which the LORD thy God shall choose; 9. And thou shalt come unto the priests, the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and enquire, and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment. 10. And thou shalt do according to the sentence which they of that place (which the LORD shall choose) shall shew thee, and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee: 11. According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, to the right hand nor to the left. 12. And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest (that standeth to minister there before the LORD thy God) or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel. 13. And all the people shall hear and fear, and do no more presumptuously.

Courts of judgment were ordered to be erected in every city, *chap. xvi. 18.* and they were empowered to hear and determine causes according to law, both those which we call pleas of the crown, and those between party and party, and we may suppose that ordinarily they ended the matters that were brought before them, and their sentence was definitive: but, 1. It is here taken for granted that sometimes a case might come into their court too difficult for those inferior judges to determine, who could not be thought to be so learned in the laws as those that presided in the higher courts. So that (to speak in the language of our law) they must find a special verdict, and take time to advise before the giving of judgment, *ver. 8.* If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, which it would be no dishonour to the judges to own the difficulty of, suppose it between blood and blood, the blood of a person which cried, and the blood of him that was charged with the murder which was demanded; when it was doubtful upon the evidence whether it was wilful, or casual: or between plea and plea, the plea, that is the bill, or declaration of the plaintiff, and the plea of the defendant; between stroke and stroke, in actions of assault and battery; in these and the like cases, tho' the evidence were plain, yet doubts might arise about the sense and meaning of the law, and the application of it to the particular case.

2. These difficult cases, which hitherto had been brought to Moses according to Jethro's advice, were, after his death, to be brought to the supreme power, wherever it was lodged, whether in a judge, when there was such an extraordinary person raised up, and qualified for that great service, as Othniel, Deborah, Gideon, &c. or in the high-priest, when he was by the eminency of his gifts called of God to preside in publick affairs, as Eli; or, (if no singular person were marked by heaven for this honour,) then in the priests and Levites, (or in the priests that were Levites) that not only attended the sanctuary, but met in council, to receive appeals from the inferior courts, who might reasonably be supposed not only to be best qualified by their learning and experience, but

but to have the best assistance of the divine Spirit to decide doubts, *ver. 9, 11, 12.* They are not appointed to consult the Urim and Thummim, for it is supposed that was to be consulted only in cases relating to the publick, either the body of the people, or the prince: but in ordinary cases, the wisdom and integrity of those that sat at the stern must be relied on, their judgment concerning the meaning of the law must be acquiesced in, and the sentence must be passed accordingly: and tho' their judgment had not the divine authority of an oracle, yet besides the moral certainty it had, vine authority of knowing, prudent, and experienced men, it as the judgment of knowing, prudent, and experienced men, it had the advantage of a divine promise implied in those words, *ver. 9, they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment*; and the support of a divine institution, by which they were made the supreme judicature of the nation.

3. The definitive sentence given by the judge, priest, or great council, must be obeyed by the parties concerned, upon pain of death. *Thou shalt do according to their sentence, ver. 10. thou shalt observe to do it, thou shalt not decline from it (ver. 11.) to the right hand or to the left.* Note, It is for the honour of God, and the welfare of a people, that the authority of the higher power be supported, and the due order of government observed; that those be obeyed who are appointed to rule, and that every soul be subject to them in all those things that fall within their commission. Tho' the party thought himself injured by the sentence (as every man is apt to be partial in his own cause) yet he must needs be subject, must stand to the award, how unpleasing soever, and bear or lose, or pay according to it, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. But if an inferior judge contradict the sentence of the higher court, and will not execute the orders of it, or a private person refuse to conform himself to their sentence, the contumacy must be punished with death, tho' the matter were never so small in which the opposition was made, *That man shall die, and all the people shall hear and fear, ver. 12, 13.* See here, (1.) The evil of disobedience, rebellion and stubbornness, from a spirit of contradiction and opposition to God, or those in authority under him, from a principle of contempt, and self-willedness, are as witchcraft and idolatry. To differ in opinion from weakness and infirmity may be excused, and must be born with, but to do presumptuously, in pride, and wickedness, (as the ancient translations explain it) this is to take up arms against the government, and is an affront to him by whom the powers that be are ordained. (2.) The design of punishment, that others may hear and fear, and not do the like. Some would be so considerate as to infer the heinousness of the offence from the grievousness of the penalty, and therefore would detest it; and others would so far consult their own safety, as to cross their humors by conforming to the sentence, rather than to sin against their own heads, and forfeit their lives by going contrary to it. From this law the apostle infers the soreness of the punishment they will be thought worthy of, that trample on the authority of the Son of God, *Heb. x. 28, 29.*

14. ¶ When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shall say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me: 15. Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee whom the LORD thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother. 16. But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. 17. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold. 18. And it shall be when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the priests the Levites. 19. And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: 20. That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom; he, and his children in the midst of Israel.

After the laws which concerned subjects, fitly follow the laws which concern kings: for they that rule others must themselves remember that they are under command. Here are laws given,

1. To the electors of the empire, what rules they must go by in making their choice, *ver. 14, 15.* (1.) It is here supposed that the people would in process of time be desirous of a king, whose royal pomp and power would be thought to make their nation look great among their neighbours. Their having a king is neither promised as a mercy, nor commanded as a duty, nothing could be better for them than the divine regimen they were under, but it

is permitted them, if they desired it: so that care was taken that the ends of government were answered, and God's laws duly observed and put in execution, they shall not be tied to any one form of government, but shall be welcome to have a king. Tho' something irregular is supposed to be the principle of the desire, that they might be like the nations, (whereas God many ways distinguished them from the nations) yet God would indulge them in it, because he intended to serve his own purposes by it, in making the regal government, typical of the kingdom of the Messiah. (2.) They are directed in their choice. If they will have a king over them, as God foresaw they would, (tho' it do not appear that ever the motion was made till almost 400 years after,) then they must (1.) ask counsel at God's mouth, and make him king whom God should chuse; and happy it was for them that they had an oracle to consult in so weighty an affair, and a God to chuse for them who knows infallibly what every man is, and will be. Kings are God's vicegerents, and therefore it is fit he should have the chusing of them; God had himself been in a particular manner Israel's king, and if they set another over them under him, it was necessary he should nominate the person. Accordingly when the people desired a king, they applied themselves to Samuel, a prophet of the Lord; and afterwards David, Solomon, Jeroboam, Jehu, and others, were chosen by prophets; and the people are reprov'd for not observing this law, *Hof. viii. 4. They have set up kings, but not by me.* In all cases God's choice, if we can but know it, must direct, determine, and over-rule ours. (2.) They must not chuse a foreigner under pretence of strengthening their alliances, or of the extraordinary fitness of the person, lest a strange king should introduce strange customs, or usages, contrary to those that were established by the divine law: but he must be one from among thy brethren; that he may be a type of Christ who is bone of our bone, *Heb. ii. 14.*

2. Laws are here given to the prince that should be elected, for the due administration of the government.

1. He must carefully avoid every thing that would divert him from God and religion. Riches, honours, and pleasures, are the three great hindrances of godliness (*the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life*) especially to those in high stations: against these therefore the king is here warned. 1. He must not gratify the love of honour by multiplying horses, *ver. 16.* He that rode upon a horse (a stately creature) in a country where asses and mules were generally used, looked very great, and therefore tho' he might have horses for his own saddle, and chariots, yet he must not set servants on horse-back, *Eccl. x. 7.* nor have many horses for his officers, and guards; when God was their king, his judges rode on asses, *Judg. v. 10.—xii. 14.* nor must he multiply horses for war, lest he should trust too much to them, *Psal. xx. 7.—xxxiii. 17. Hof. xiv. 3.* The reason here given against his multiplying horses, is, because it would raise a greater correspondence with Egypt, (which furnished Canaan with horses, *1 Kings x. 28, 29.*) than it was fit the Israel of God should have, who were brought thence with such a high hand. *Ye shall return no more that way,* for fear of being infected with the idolatries of Egypt, (*Lev. xviii. 3.*) to which they were very prone. Note, We should take heed of that commerce or conversation, by which we are in danger of being drawn into sin. If Israel must not return to Egypt, they must not trade with Egypt; Solomon got no good by it. 2. He must not gratify the love of pleasure by multiplying wives, *ver. 17.* as Solomon did to his undoing, *1 Kings xi. 1.* that his heart, being set upon them, turn not away from business, and every thing that is serious, and especially from the exercise of piety, and devotion, to which nothing is a greater enemy than the indulgence of the flesh. 3. He must not gratify the love of riches by greatly multiplying silver and gold. A competent treasury is allowed him, and he is not forbidden to be a good husband of it, but (1.) He must not greatly multiply money so as to oppress his people by raising it, (as Solomon seems to have done, *1 Kings xii. 4.*) nor so as to deceive himself, by trusting to it, and setting his heart upon it, *Psal. lxxii. 10.* (2.) He must not multiply it to himself. David multiplied silver and gold, but it was for the service of God (*1 Chron. xxix. 4.*) not for himself; for his people, not for his own family.

2. He must carefully apply himself to the law of God, and make that his rule. This must be to him better than all riches, honours, and pleasures, than many horses or many wives, better than thousands of gold and silver.

1. He must write himself a copy of the law, out of the original which was in the custody of the priests that attended the sanctuary, *ver. 18.* Some think he was to write only this book of Deuteronomy which is an abstract of the law, and the precepts of which being mostly moral and judicial concerned the king, more than the laws in Leviticus and Numbers, which the priests were chiefly bound to acquaint themselves with. Others think he must transcribe all the five books of Moses, which are called the law; and which were preserved together as the foundation of their religion. Now (1.) Tho' the king might be presumed to have very fair copies by him from his ancestors, yet besides those, he must have one of his own: it might be presumed, theirs were worn with constant use, he must have a fresh one to begin the world with. (2.) Tho' he had secretaries about him whom he might employ to write this copy, and who perhaps could

could write a better hand than he, yet he must do it himself, with his own hand, for the honour of the law, and that he might think no act of religion below him, to enure himself to labour and study, and especially that he might thereby be obliged to take particular notice of every part of the law, and by writing it might imprint it in his mind. Note, It is of great use for each of us to write down what we observe as most affecting and edifying to us, out of the scriptures, and good books, and the sermons we hear. A prudent pen may go far towards making up the deficiencies of the memory, and the furnishing of the treasures of the good householder with things new and old. (3.) He must do this even when he sits upon the throne of his kingdom; supposing he had not done it before. When he begins to apply himself to business, he must apply himself to this in the first place. He that sits upon the throne of a kingdom cannot but have his hands full. The affairs of his kingdom both at home and abroad call for a larger share of his time and thoughts, and yet he must write himself a copy of the law. Let not those that call themselves men of business think that will excuse them from making religion their business; nor let great men think it any disparagement to them to write for themselves, those *great things of Gods law which he hath written to them*, Hof. viii. 12.

2. Having a bible by him of his own writing, he must not think it enough to keep it in his cabinet, but he must *read therein all the days of his life*, ver. 19. It is not enough to have bibles, but we must use them, use them daily, as the duty and necessity of every day requires: our souls must have their constant meals of that manna, and if well digested it will be true nourishment and strength to them. As the body is receiving benefit by its food continually, and not only when it is eating, so doth the soul by the word of God, if it *meditate therein day and night*, Psal. i. 2. And we must persevere in the use of the written word of God, as long as we live. Christ's scholars never learn above their bibles; but will have constant occasion for them till they come to that world where knowledge and love will both be made perfect.

3. His writing and reading were all nothing if he did not reduce to practice what he wrote and read, ver. 19. 20. The word of God is not designed merely to be an entertaining subject of speculation, but to be a commanding rule of conversation. Let him know,

1. What dominion his religion must have over him, and what influence it must have upon him. (1.) It must possess him with a very reverent and awful regard to the divine majesty and authority. He must learn, (and thus the most *learned* must be *ever learning*) to *fear the Lord his God*; and as high as he is, must remember that God is above him, and whatever fear his subjects owe to him, that and much more he owes to God, as his king. (2.) It must engage him to a constant observance of the law of God, and a conscientious obedience to it, as the product of that fear. He must keep *all the words of this law*, (He is *custos utriusque tabulæ*) not only to take care that others do them, but to do them himself as an humble servant to the God of heaven, and a good example to his inferiors. (3.) It must keep him humble; how much soever he is advanced, let him keep his spirit low, and let the *fear of his God prevent the contempt of his brethren*: and let not his heart be *lifted up above them*, so as to carry himself haughtily or disdainfully towards them, and to trample upon them; let him not conceit himself better than they, because he is bigger, and makes a fairer shew, but let him remember that he is the *minister of God to them for good*. (*major singulis, but minor universis*) It must prevent his errors, either *on the right hand or on the left*: (for there are errors, on both hands) and keep him right in all instances to his God, and to his duty.

2. What advantage his religion would be of to him. They that fear God and keep his commandments will certainly fare the better for it in this world. The greatest monarch in the world may receive more benefit by religion, than by all the wealth and power of his monarchy. It will be of advantage, (1.) To his person. *He shall prolong his days in his kingdom*. We find in the history of the kings of Judah that generally the best reigns were the longest, except when God shortened them for the punishment of the people; as Josiah's. (2.) To his family; his children shall also prosper. Entail religion upon posterity, and God will entail a blessing upon it.

C H A P. XVIII.

In this chapter, (1.) The rights and revenues of the church are settled, and rules given concerning the Levites ministration and maintenance, ver. 1—8. (2.) The caution against the idolatrous abominable customs of the heathen is repeated, ver. 9—14. (3.) A promise is given them of the spirit of prophecy to continue among them, and to center at last in Christ the great prophet, ver. 15—18. Wrath threatened against those that despise prophecy, ver. 19. or counterfeit it, ver. 20. and a rule given for the trial of it, ver. 21, 22.

1. **T**HE priests the Levites, and all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel: they shall eat the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and his inheritance. 2. Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren: the LORD is their inheritance, as he hath said unto them. 3. ¶ And this shall be the priests due from the people, from them that offer a sacrifice, whether it be ox or sheep; and they shall give unto the priest the shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the maw. 4. The first-fruit also of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thy oyl, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep shalt thou give him. 5. For the LORD thy God hath chosen him out of all thy tribes; to stand to minister in the name of the LORD, him and his sons for ever. 6. ¶ And if a Levite come from any of thy gates out of all Israel, where he sojourned, and come with all the desire of his mind unto the place which the LORD shall choose; 7. Then he shall minister in the name of the LORD his God, as all his brethren the Levites do, which stand there before the LORD. 8. They shall have like portions to eat, besides that which cometh of the sale of his patrimony.

Magistracy and ministry are two divine institutions of admirable use for the support and advancement of the kingdom of God among men; laws concerning the former we had in the close of the foregoing chapter, directions are in this given concerning the latter. Land-marks are here set between the estates of priests and people. 1. Care is taken that the priests entangle not themselves with the affairs of this life, nor enrich themselves with the wealth of this world, they have better things to mind. *They shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel. i. e.* no share either in the spoils taken in war, or in the land that was to be divided by lot, ver. 1. Their warfare and husbandry are both spiritual, and enough to fill their hands both with work and profit, and to content them. *The Lord is their inheritance*, ver. 1. Note, Those that have God for their inheritance, according to the new covenant, should not be greedy of great things in the world; neither gripe what they have, nor grasp at more, but look upon all present things with the indifference which becomes those that believe God to be all-sufficient.

2. Care is likewise taken that they want not any of the comforts, and conveniencies of this life. Tho' God who is a spirit is their inheritance, it doth not therefore follow that they must live upon the air: No, 1. The people must provide for them. They must have their *due, from the people*, ver. 3. Their maintenance must not depend upon the generosity of the people, but they must be by law entitled to it. He that is taught in the word, ought in justice to communicate to him that teacheth him; and he that has the benefit of solemn religious assemblies, to contribute to the comfortable support of those that preside in such assemblies. (1.) The priests that in their courses served at the altar, had their share of the sacrifices, viz. the peace-offerings, that were brought while they were in waiting; besides the breast and shoulder which were appointed them before, Lev. vii. 32, 33, 34. the cheeks and maw are here ordered to be given them; so far was the law from diminishing what was already granted, that it gave them an augmentation. (2.) The first-fruits which arose within such a precinct were brought in, as it should seem, to the priests that resided among them, for their maintenance in the country; the *first* of their corn and wine for food, and the *first* of their fleece for clothing; ver. 4. for the priests who were employed to teach others, ought themselves to learn, having food and raiment, to be therewith content. The first-fruits were devoted to God, and he constituted the priests his receivers; and if God reckons what is in general given to the poor lent to him, to be repaid with interest, much more what is in particular given to poor ministers. There is a good reason given for this constant charge upon their estates, ver. 5. because the Levites were *chosen of God*, and his choice must be owned and countenanced, and those honoured by us whom he honours; and *because they stood to minister*, and ought to be recompensed for their attendance and labour, especially since it was *in the name of the Lord*, by his warrant, in his service, and for his praise, and this charge entailed upon his seed, for ever; those who were thus engaged, and thus employed, ought to have all due encouragement given them, as some of the most needful useful members of their commonwealth.

2. The priests must not themselves stand in one another's light. If a priest, that by the law was obliged to serve at the altar, only in his turn, and was paid for that, should, out of his great affection to the sanctuary devote himself to a constant attendance there, and quit the ease and pleasure of the city in which he had his lot, for the satisfaction of serving the altar, the priests whose turn it was to attend, must admit him both to join in the work, and to share in the wages, and not grudge him either the honour of the one, or the profit of the other, tho' it might seem to break in upon them, ver. 6, 7, 8. Note, A heavy

pious zeal to serve God and his church, tho' it may a little encroach upon a settled order, and there may be somewhat in it that looks irregular, yet ought to be gratified, and not discouraged. He that appears to have a hearty affection to the sanctuary, and loves dearly to be employed in the service of it, *in God's name let him minister*, he shall be as welcome to God, as the Levites whose course it was to minister, and should be so to them. The settling of the courses was intended rather to secure those to the work that were not willing to do so much, than to exclude any that were willing to do more. And he that thus serves as a volunteer, shall have as good pay as the pressed men, *besides that which comes of the sale of his patrimony*. The church of Rome obliges those who leave their estates to go into a monastery, to bring the profits of their estate with them, into the common stock of the monastery, for gain is their godliness; but here it is ordered that the pious devotee should reserve to himself the produce of his patrimony; for religion and the ministry were never appointed of God, however they have been abused by men, to serve a secular interest.

9. ¶ When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. 10. There shall not be found among you *any one* that maketh his son, or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, 11. Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer: 12. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations, the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee. 13. Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God. 14. For these nations which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so to do.

One would not think there had been so much need, as it seems there was, to arm the people of Israel against the infection of the idolatrous customs of the Canaanites. Was it possible that a people so blessed with divine institutions, should ever admit the brutish and barbarous inventions of men and devils? Were they in any danger of making those their tutors and directors in religion, whom God had made their captives and tributaries? It seems there was; and therefore after many the like cautions, they are here charged not to do after the abominations of those nations, *ver. 9*.

1. Some particulars are instanced in; As (1.) The consecrating of their children to Moloch, an idol that represented the sun, by making them to *pass through the fire*, and sometimes consuming them as sacrifices in the fire, *ver. 10*. See the law against this before, *Lev. xviii. 21*. (2.) Using arts of divination, to get the unnecessary knowledge of things to come; *enchantments, witchcrafts, charms, &c.* by which that power and knowledge which is peculiar to God was attributed to the devil, to the great reproach both of God's counsels and of his providence, *ver. 10, 11*. One would wonder such arts and works of darkness, so senseless and absurd, so impious and profane, could be found in a country where divine revelation shone so clear, yet we find remains of them even there where Christ's holy religion is known and professed; such are the powers and policies of the *rulers of the darkness of this world*. But let those that give heed to fortune-tellers, or go to wizards for the discovery of things secret, that use spells for the cures of diseases, are in any league or acquaintance with familiar spirits, or say a confederacy with those that are, let them know that they can have no fellowship with God while thus they have fellowship with devils. It is amazing to think there should be any pretenders of this kind in such a land, and day of light, as we live in.

2. Some reasons are given against their conformity to the customs of the Gentiles. 1. Because it would make them abominable to God. The things themselves being hateful to him, those that do them are an abomination; and miserable is that creature that is become odious to its Creator, *ver. 12*. See the malignity, and mischievousness of sin: that must needs be an evil thing indeed which provokes the God of mercy to detest the work of his own hands. 2. Because these abominable practices had been the ruin of the Canaanites, which ruin they were not only the witnesses but the instruments of. It would be the most inexcusable folly, as well as the most unpardonable impiety, for them to practise themselves those very things, for which they had been employed so severely to chastise others. Did the land spew out the abominations of the Canaanites, and shall Israel lick up the vomit? 3. Because they were *better taught*, *ver. 13*. 4. It is an argument like that of the apostle against Christians walking as the Gentiles walked, *Ephes. iv. 17, 18*. *Ye have not so learned Christ*. It is true, these nations whom God gave up to their own hearts lust, and suffered to walk in their own ways, *Acts xiv. 16*. did thus corrupt themselves, but thou art not thus abandoned by the grace of God, *the Lord thy God has not suffered thee to do so*, thou art instructed in divine things, and hast fair

No. XIV.

warning given thee of the evil of those practices, and therefore whatever others do, it is expected that thou shouldst be *perfect with the Lord thy God, i. e.* that thou shouldst give divine honours to him, to him only and to no other, and not mix any of the superstitious customs of the heathen with his institutions. One of the Chaldee paraphrasts here takes notice of God's furnishing them with the oracle of Urim and Thummim as a preservative from all unlawful arts of divination. They were fools who would go to consult the father of lies, when they had such a ready way of consulting the God of truth.

15. ¶ The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken. 16. According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb, in the day of the assembly, saying Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God; neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. 17. And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. 18. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. 19. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. 20. But the prophet which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. 21. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? 22. When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

Here is, 1. The promise of the great prophet, with a command to receive him, and hearken to him. Now,

1. Some think it is the promise of a succession of prophets; that should for many ages be kept up in Israel. Besides the priests and Levites, their ordinary ministers, whose office it was to teach Jacob God's law, they should have prophets, extraordinary ministers, to reprove them for their faults, and mind them of their duty, and to foretel things to come, judgments for warning, and deliverances for their comfort. Having these prophets, (1.) They need not use divinations, nor consult with familiar spirits, for they might enquire of God's prophets even concerning their private affairs, as Saul did when he was in quest of his father's asses, *1 Sam. ix. 6*. (2.) They could not miss the way of their duty through ignorance or mistake, nor differ in their opinions about it, having prophets among them, whom in every difficult doubtful case they might advise with, and appeal to. These prophets were like unto Moses in some respects, tho' far inferior to him, *Deut. xxxiv. 10*.

2. Whether a succession of prophets be included in this promise or no, we are sure it is primarily intended as a promise of Christ; and it is the clearest promise of him that is in all the law of Moses. It is expressly applied to our Lord Jesus as the Messiah promised, *Acts iii. 22. and vii. 37.* and the people had an eye to this promise when they said concerning him, *This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world*, *Joh. vi. 14.* and it was his Spirit that spake in all the other prophets, *1 Pet. i. 11*. Observe,

1. What it is that is here promised concerning Christ; what God promised Moses at mount Sinai, which he relates, *ver. 18*. he promised the people, *ver. 15*. in God's name, (1.) That there should come a prophet, great above all the prophets, by whom God would make known himself and his will to the children of men more fully and clearly than ever he had done before. He is the *light of the world*, as prophecy was of the Jewish church, *Joh. viii. 12*. He is the word by whom God speaks to us, *Joh. i. 1*. *Heb. i. 1*. (2.) That God would raise him up from the midst of them. In his birth he should be one of that nation, should live among them, and be sent to them. In his resurrection he should be raised up at Jerusalem, and from thence his doctrine should go forth to all the world; thus God having raised up his son, Christ Jesus, sent him to bless us. (3.) That he should be like unto Moses, only as much above him, as the other prophets came short of him. Moses was such a prophet as was a lawgiver to Israel, and their deliverer out of Egypt, and so was Christ, he not only teaches, but rules and saves. Moses was the founder of a new dispensation, by signs and wonders and mighty deeds, and so was Christ, by which he proved himself a teacher come from God. Was Moses faithful? So was Christ; Moses as a servant, but Christ as a son. (4.) That God would put his words in his mouth, *ver. 18*. What messages God had to send to the children of men, he would send them by him, and give him full instructions what to say and do as a prophet. Hence our Saviour saith, *John vii. 16*.

My doctrine is not mine originally, but his that sent me. So that this great promise is performed; this prophet is come, even Jesus, it is he that should come, and we are to look for no other.

2. The agreeableness of this designed dispensation with the people avowed choice and desire at mount Sinai, *ver. 16, 17.* There God had spoken to them in thunder and lightning, out of the midst of the fire and thick darkness; every word made their ears tingle, and their hearts tremble, and the whole congregation ready to die with fear: in this fright they begged hard that God would not speak to them in this manner any more, they could not bear it, it would drive them out of their wits; but that he would speak to them by men like themselves, by Moses now, and afterwards by other prophets like unto him; Well, faith God, it shall be so; they shall be spoken to by men, whose terrors shall not make them afraid; and to crown the favour beyond what they were able to ask or think, in the fulness of time, *the Word itself* should be made flesh, and they should see his glory as of the only begotten of the Father, not as at mount Sinai full of majesty and terror, but full of grace and truth, *John i. 14.* Thus, in answer to the request of those who were struck with amazement by the law, God promised the incarnation of his Son, tho' we may suppose it far from the thoughts of them that made that request.

3. A charge and command given to all people to hear and believe, hear and obey this great prophet here promised, *unto him ye shall hearken*, *ver. 15.* and whoever will not hearken to him shall be surely and severely reckoned with for his contempt, *ver. 19. I will require it of him.* God himself applied this to our Lord Jesus in the voice that came out of the excellent glory, *Mat. xvii. 5. Hear ye him, i. e.* this is he concerning whom it was said by Moses of old, *unto him ye shall hearken*; and Moses and Elias then stood by and assented to it. The sentence here passed on those that hearken not to this prophet is repeated and ratified in the New Testament, *He that believeth not the Son, the wrath of God abideth on him*, *John iii. 36.* And how shall we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven? *Heb. xii. 25.* The Chaldee paraphrase here reads it, *My word shall require it of him*; which can be no other than a divine person, Christ the eternal word, to whom the Father has committed all judgment, and by whom he will at the last day judge the world. Whoever turn a deaf ear to Jesus Christ, it is at their peril, the same that is the prophet is to be their judge, *Joh. xii. 48.*

2. Here is a caution against false prophets.

1. By way of threatening against the pretenders themselves, *ver. 20.* Whoever sets up for a prophet, and produceth either a commission from a false god, as the prophets of Baal, or a false and counterfeit commission from the true God, it shall be deemed and adjudged no less than high-treason against the crown and dignity of the King of Kings, and that traitor shall be put to death, (*ver. 20.*) viz. by the judgment of the great Sanhedrin, which in process of time sat at Jerusalem: and therefore our Saviour faith, *That a prophet could not perish but at Jerusalem*, and lays the blood of the prophets at Jerusalem's door, *Luke xiii. 33, 34.* whom therefore God himself would punish, yet there false prophets were supported.

2. By way of direction to the people, that they might not be imposed upon by pretenders; of which there were many, as appears, *Jer. xxiii. 25. Ezek. xiii. 6. 1 Kings xxii. 6.* It is a very proper question which they are supposed to ask, *ver. 21.* Since it is so great a duty to hearken to the true prophets, and yet so great a danger of being misled by false prophets, *How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken?* By what marks may we discover a cheat? Note, It highly concerns us to have a right touchstone wherewith to try the word we hear, that we may know what that word is which the Lord has not spoken. Whatever is directly repugnant to sense, to the light and law of nature, and to the plain sense of the written word, we may be sure is not that which the Lord hath spoken; nor that which gives countenance and encouragement to sin, or has a manifest tendency to the destruction of piety or charity; far be it from God that he should contradict himself. The rule here given in answer to this enquiry was adapted chiefly to that state, *ver. 22.* If there was any cause to suspect the sincerity of a prophet, let them observe if he gave them any sign, or foretold something to come, and the event was not according to his prediction, they might be sure he was not sent of God. This doth not refer so much to the foretelling of mercies and judgments, tho' as to those and the difference between the predictions of mercies and judgments, there is a rule of discerning between truth and falsehood laid down by the prophet, *Jer. xxviii. 8, 9.* but rather to the giving of signs on purpose to confirm their mission. Tho' the sign did come to pass, yet that would not serve to prove their mission, if they called them to serve other gods; that point had been already settled *Deut. xiii. 1, 2, 3.* But if the sign did not come to pass, that would serve to disprove their mission. When Moses cast his rod upon the ground (it is bishop Patrick's explication of this) and said it should become a serpent, if it had not accordingly been turned into a serpent, Moses had been a false prophet: if when Elijah called for fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice, and none had come, he had been no better than the prophets of Baal. Samuel's mission was proved by this, *That God let none of his words fall to the ground*, *1 Sam. iii. 19, 20.* And by the miracles Christ wrought,

especially by that great sign he gave of his resurrection the third day, which came to pass as he foretold, it appeared that he was a teacher come from God. Lastly, They are bid not to be afraid of a false prophet; i. e. not to be afraid of the judgments such a one might denounce to amuse people, and strike a terror upon them; nor to be afraid of executing the law upon him, when upon a strict and impartial scrutiny it appeared that he was a false prophet. This command, not to fear a false prophet, implies that a true prophet, who proved his commission by clear and undeniable proofs was to be feared, and it was at their peril if they offered him any violence, or put any slight upon him.

CHAP. XIX.

The laws which Moses had been hitherto repeating and urging, mostly concerned the acts of religion and devotion towards God; but here he comes more fully to prove the duties of righteousness between man and man. This chapter relates; (1.) To the sixth commandment, Thou shalt not kill, ver. 1—13. (2.) To the eighth commandment, Thou shalt not steal, ver. 14. (3.) To the ninth commandment, Thou shalt not bear false witness, ver. 15—21.

1. **W**HEN the LORD thy God hath cut off the nations whose land the LORD thy God giveth thee, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their cities, and in their houses; 2. Thou shalt separate three cities for thee in the midst of thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it. 3. Thou shalt prepare thee a way, and divide the coasts of thy land (which the LORD thy God giveth thee to inherit) into three parts, that every slayer may flee thither. 4. ¶ And this is the case of the slayer which shall flee thither, that he may live: Whoso killeth his neighbour ignorantly, whom he hated not in time past, 5. As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbour, to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the ax to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbour, that he die; he shall flee unto one of those cities, and live: 6. Lest the avenger of the blood pursue the slayer, while his heart is hot, and overtake him, because the way is long, and slay him, whereas he was not worthy of death, inasmuch as he hated him not in time past. 7. Wherefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt separate three cities for thee. 8. And if the LORD thy God enlarge thy coast, (as he hath sworn unto thy fathers) and give thee all the land which he promised to give unto thy fathers; 9. (If thou shalt keep all these commandments to do them; which I command thee this day, to love the LORD thy God, and to walk ever in his ways) then shalt thou add three cities more for thee, beside these three: 10. That innocent blood be not shed in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and so blood be upon thee. 11. ¶ But if any man hate his neighbour and lie in wait for him, and rise up against him, and smite him mortally, that he die, and fleeth into one of these cities: 12. Then the elders of his city shall send, and fetch him thence, and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die. 13. Thine eye shall not pity him, but thou shalt put away the guilt of innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with thee.

It was one of the precepts given to the sons of Noah, that *whoso sheddeth mans blood, by man shall his blood be shed*, that is, by the avenger of blood, *Gen. ix. 6.* Now here we have the law settled between blood and blood, between the blood of the murdered, and the blood of the murderer, and effectual provision made.

1. That the cities of refuge should be a protection to him that slew another casually, so that he should not die for that as a crime which was not his voluntary act, but only his unhappiness. The appointment of these cities of refuge we had before, *Exod. xxi. 13.* and the law laid down concerning them at large, *Numb. xxxv. 10, &c.* It is here repeated, and direction is given concerning three things. (1.) The appointing of three cities in Canaan for this purpose. Moses had already appointed three on that side Jordan, which he saw the conquest of, and now he bids them when they were settled in the other part of the country to appoint three more, *ver. 1, 2, 3, 7.* The country was to be divided into three districts, as near as might be, equal, and a city of refuge in the centre of each, so that every corner of the land might have one within reach. Thus Christ is not a refuge at a distance which we must ascend to heaven, or go down to the deep for, but the word is nigh us, and Christ in the word, *Rom. x. 8.* The gospel brings salvation to our door, and there it knocks for admission.

mission. And to make the flight of the delinquent the more easy, the way must be prepared that led to the city of refuge. Probably, they had caufways or street-ways leading to those cities, and the Jews say, that the magistrates of Israel upon one certain day in the year, sent out messengers to see that those roads were in good repair, and they were to remove stumbling-blocks, mend bridges that were broken, and where two ways met, they were to set up a Mercurial post, with a finger to point the right way, on which was engraven in great letters, *Miklat; Miklat; refuge, refuge.* In allusion to this, gospel ministers are to shew people the way to Christ, and to assist and direct them in flying by faith to him for refuge. They must be ready to remove their prejudices, and help them over their difficulties. And blessed be God, *the way of holiness* to all that seek it faithfully is a high-way, so plain that *the way-faring men tho' fools shall not err therein.*

(2.) The use to be made of these cities, *ver. 4, 5, 6.* (1.) It is supposed, it might so happen, that a man might be the death of his neighbour without any design upon him, either from a sudden passion, or a malice prepenfe, but purely by accident, as by the flying off of an ax-head, which is the instance here given, with which every case of this kind was to be compared, and by it adjudged. See how human life lies exposed daily, and what deaths we are often in, and what need therefore we have to be always ready, our souls being continually in our hands. How are the sons of men *snared in an evil time, when it falls suddenly upon them,* (Eccl. ix. 12.) an evil time indeed it is, when this happens, not only to the slain but to the slayer. (2.) It is supposed that the relations of the person slain would be forward to avenge the blood; in affection to their friend, and in zeal for publick justice. Tho' the law did not allow the avenging of any other affront or injury with death, yet the avenger of blood, the blood of a relation, shall have great allowances made for the heat of his heart, upon such a provocation as that, and his killing the manslayer, tho' he was so by accident only, should not be accounted murder, if he did it before he got to the city of refuge, tho' it is owned he was not worthy of death. Thus would God possess people with a great horror and dread of the sin of murder: if meer chance-medley did thus expose a man, surely he that wilfully doth violence to the blood of any person, whether from an old grudge, or upon a sudden provocation, must flee to the pit, and *let no man stay him,* Prov. xxviii. 17. yet the New Testament represents the sin of murder as more heinous and more dangerous than even this law doth, 1 Joh. iii. 15. *We know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.* (3.) It is provided, that if an avenger of blood should be so unreasonable as to demand satisfaction for blood shed by accident only, then the city of refuge should protect the slayer. Sins of ignorance indeed do expose us to the wrath of God, but there is relief provided, if by faith and repentance we make use of it. Paul that had been a persecutor obtained mercy because he did it ignorantly; and Christ prayed for his crucifiers, *Father forgive them for they know not what they do.*

(3.) The appointing of three cities more for this use, in case God should hereafter enlarge their territories, and the dominion of their religion; that all those places which came under the government of the law of Moses in other instances, might enjoy the benefit of that law in this instance, *ver. 8, 9, 10.* Here is, 1. An intimation of God's gracious intention to enlarge their coast, as he had promised to their fathers, if they did not by their disobedience forfeit the promise, the condition of which is here carefully repeated, that if it were not performed the reproach might lie upon them, and not on God. He promised to *give it, if thou shalt keep all these commandments;* not otherwise. 2. A direction to them to appoint three cities more in their new conquests, which the number intimates should be as large as those their first conquests were, wherever the border of Israel went; this privilege must attend it that *innocent blood be not shed;* *ver. 10.* Tho' God is the saviour and preserver of all men, and has a tender regard to all lives, yet the blood of Israelites is in a particular manner precious to him, *Psal. lxxii. 14.* The learned Ainsworth observes, that the Jewish writers themselves own, that the condition not being performed, the promise of the enlarging of their coast was never fulfilled, so that there was no occasion of ever adding these three cities of refuge, yet the *holy blessed God* (say they) *did not command it in vain, for in the days of Messiah the prince, three other cities shall be added to these six:* they expect it to be fulfilled in the letter, but we know that in Christ it has its spiritual accomplishment, for the borders of the gospel Israel are enlarged, according to the promise, and in Christ *the Lord our righteousness* refuge is provided for those that by faith fly unto him.

2. It is provided that the cities of refuge should be no sanctuary or shelter to a wilful murderer, but even thence he should be fetched, and delivered to the avenger of blood, *ver. 11, 12, 13.* (1.) This shews that wilful murder must never be protected by the civil magistrate; he bears the sword of justice in vain if he suffer those to escape the edge of it that lie under the guilt of blood, which he by office is the avenger of. During the dominion of the papacy here in our own land, before the Reformation, there were some churches and religious houses (as they called them) that were made sanctuaries, for the protection of all sorts of criminals that fled to them, wilful murderers not excepted,

so that (as Stamford saith, in his *Pleas of the Crown, lib. ii. cap. 38.*) the government follows not Moses but Romulus, and it was not till about the latter end of Henry the eighth's time that this privilege of sanctuary for wilful murder was taken away; when in that, as in other cases, the word of God came to be regarded more than the dictates of the see of Rome. And some have thought it would be a compleating of that instance of reformation, if the benefit of clergy were taken away for manslaughter, that is, the killing of a man upon a small provocation; since this law allowed refuge only in case of that which our law calls chance-medley. (2.) It may be alluded to, to shew that in Jesus Christ there is no refuge for presumptuous sinners, that *go on still in their trespasses.* If we thus *sin wilfully,* sin and go on it, there *remains no sacrifice,* Heb. x. 26. Those that flee to Christ from their sins, shall be safe in him, but not those that expect to be sheltered by him in their sins. Salvation it self cannot save such, divine justice will fetch them even from the city of refuge, the protection of which they are not entitled to.

14. ¶ Thou shalt not remove thy neighbours land-mark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance which thou shalt inherit, in the land that the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it. 15. ¶ One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity; or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses shall the matter be established. 16. ¶ If a false witness rise up against any man, to testify against him *that which is wrong:* 17. Then both the men between whom the controversy is, shall stand before the LORD, before the priests, and the judges which shall be in those days. 18. And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother: 19. Then shall ye do unto him as he had thought to have done unto his brother: for shalt thou put the evil away from among you. 20. And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you. 21. And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Here is a statute for the preventing of frauds and perjuries; for the divine law takes care of mens rights and properties, and hath made a hedge about them. Such a friend is it to human society, and mens civil interest.

1. A law against frauds, *ver. 14.* (1.) Here is, an implicit direction given to the first planters of Canaan, to fix land-marks, according to the distribution of the land to the several tribes and families, by lot. Note, It is the will of God that every one should know his own: and that all good means should be used to prevent encroachments, and the doing and suffering of wrong. When right is settled, care must be taken that it be not afterwards unsettled, and that, if possible, no occasion of dispute may arise. (2.) An express law to posterity not to remove those land-marks, which were thus fixed at first, by which a man secretly got that to himself which was his neighbour's. This, without doubt, is a moral precept, and still binding, and to us it forbids (1.) The invading of any man's right, and taking to our selves that which is not our own, by any fraudulent arts or practices; as by forging, concealing, destroying, or altering deeds and writings, which are our land-marks, to which appeals are made; or by shifting hedges, meer-stones, and boundaries. Tho' the land-marks were set by the hand of man, yet he was a thief and a robber by the law of God that removed them. Let every man be content with his own lot, and just to his own neighbours, and then we shall have no land-marks removed. (2.) It forbids the sowing of discord among neighbours, and doing any thing to occasion strife and law-suits; which is done (and it is very ill done) by confounding those things which should determine disputes, and decide controversies. And (3.) It forbids breaking in upon the settled order and constitution of civil government, and the altering of ancient usages without just cause. This law supports the honour of prescriptions. *Consuetudo facit jus.*

2. A law against perjuries, which enacts two things: 1. That a single witness should never be admitted to give evidence in a criminal cause, so as that sentence should be passed upon his testimony, *ver. 15.* This law we had before, *Numb. xxxv. 30.* and *Deut. xvii. 6.* This was enacted in favour to the prisoner, whose life and honour should not lie at the mercy of a particular person that had a pique against him: and for caution to the accuser not to say that which he could not corroborate by the testimony of another. It is a just shame which this law puts upon mankind, as false and not to be trusted, every man is by it suspected; and it is the honour of God's grace, that the record he has given concerning his Son is confirmed both in heaven and in earth by *three witnesses,* 1 Joh. v. 7. *Let God be true and every man a liar,* Rom. iii. 4.

2. That

2. That a false witness should incur the same punishment, which was to have been inflicted upon the person he accused, *ver. 16—21.* (1.) The criminal here is a false witness, who is said to rise up against a man, not only because all witnesses stood up when they gave in their evidence, but because a false witness did indeed rise up as an enemy and an assailant against him, whom he accused. *If two or three* or many witnesses concurred in a false testimony, they were all liable to be prosecuted upon this law. (2.) The person wronged or brought into peril by the false testimony is supposed to be the appellee, *ver. 17.* And yet if the person were put to death upon the evidence, and afterwards it appeared to be false, any other person, or the judges themselves *ex officio*, might call the false witness to account. (3.) Causes of this kind having more than ordinary difficulty in them were to be brought before the supreme court, *The priest and judges*, who are said to be *before the Lord*, because as other judges sat in the gates of their cities, so these at the gate of the sanctuary, *Deut. xvii. 12.* (4.) There must be great care in the trial, *ver. 18.* A diligent inquisition must be made into the characters of the persons, and all the circumstances of the case, which must be compared that the truth might be found out; which where it is thus faithfully and impartially enquired into, providence, it may be hoped, will particularly advance the discovery of. (5.) If it appeared that a man had knowingly and maliciously born false witness against his neighbour, tho' the mischief he designed him thereby was not effected, he shall undergo the same penalty which his evidence would have brought his neighbour under, *ver. 19. Nec lex est justior ulla.* If the crime he accused his neighbour of was to be punished with death, the false witness must be put to death; if with stripes, he must be beaten; if with a pecuniary mulct, he was to be fined the same sum. And because to those who considered not the heinousness of the crime, and the necessity of making this provision against it, it might seem hard to punish a man so severely for a few words speaking, especially when no mischief did actually follow, it is added, *ver. 20. Thine eye shall not pity.* No man needs to be more merciful than God. The benefit that will accrue to the publick by this severity will abundantly recompense it, *ver. 20. They that remain shall hear and fear.* Such exemplary punishments will be warnings to others not to attempt any such mischief, when they see how he that made the pit and digged it, is fallen into the ditch which he made.

CHAP. XX.

This chapter settles the Militia, and establishes the laws and ordinances of war, 1. Relating to the soldiers. (1.) Those must be encouraged that were drawn up to the battle, ver. 1—4. (2.) Those must be dismissed and sent back again whose private affairs called for their attendance at home, ver. 5, 6, 7. or whose weakness and timorousness dis fitted them for service in the field, ver. 8, 9. 2. Relating to the enemies they made war with. 1. The treaties they must make with the cities that were far off, ver. 10—15. 2. The destruction they must make of the people into whose land they were going, ver. 16—18. 3. The care they must take in besieging cities not to destroy the fruit-trees, ver. 19, 20.

1. **W**HEN thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seeest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the LORD thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 2. And it shall be when ye are come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach, and speak unto the people. 3. And shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, you approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them: 4. For the LORD your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you. 5. ¶ And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it. 6. And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not yet eaten of it? let him also go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man eat of it. 7. And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in battle, and another man take her. 8. And the officers shall speak further unto people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and faint-hearted? let him go and return to his house, lest his brethrens heart faint as well as his heart. 9. And it shall be when the officers have made an end of speaking unto the people, that they shall make captains of the armies to lead the people.

Israel was at this time to be considered rather as a camp, than as a kingdom, entering upon an enemy's country, and not yet settled in a country of their own; and besides the war they were now entering upon in order to their settlement, even after their settlement, they could neither protect nor enlarge their coast, but they must hear the alarms of war; it was therefore needful they should have direction given them in their military affairs: and in these verses they are directed in managing, marshalling and drawing up their own forces. And it is observable, that the discipline of war here prescribed, is so far from having any thing in it harsh or severe, as is usual in martial law, that the intent of the whole is on the contrary to encourage the soldiers, and to make their service easy to them.

1. They that were disposed to fight must be encouraged, and animated against their fears.

(1.) Moses here gives a general encouragement, which the leaders and commanders in the war must take to themselves, *ver. 1. Be not afraid of them.* Tho' the enemy have never so much the advantage; by their numbers, they are more than thou, and by their cavalry, their armies being much made up of horses and chariots which Israel were not allowed to multiply, yet decline not coming to a battle with them, dread not the issue, nor doubt of success. Two things they must encourage themselves with in their wars, provided they kept close to their God and their religion, otherwise they forfeited these encouragements. (1.) The presence of God with them. *The Lord thy God is with thee*, and therefore thou art not in danger, nor needst thou be afraid. See *Isa. xli. 10.* (2.) The experience they and their fathers had had of God's power and goodness, in bringing them out of the land of Egypt in defiance of Pharaoh and all his hosts, which was not only in general a proof of the divine omnipotence, but to them in particular a pledge of what God would do further for them. He that saved them from those greater enemies, would not suffer them to be run down by those that were every way less considerable, and all he had done for them to be undone again.

(2.) This encouragement must be particularly addressed to the common soldiers by a priest appointed, and, the Jews say, anointed for that purpose, whom they call the Anointed of the war, a very proper title for our anointed Redeemer, the captain of our salvation. This priest, in God's name, was to animate the people; and who so fit to do that, as he whose office it was as priest to pray for them? for the best encouragements arise from the precious promises made to the prayer of faith. This priest must (1.) Charge them not to be afraid, *ver. 3.* for nothing weakens the hands so much as that which makes the heart tremble, *ver. 3.* There is need of precept upon precept to this purpose, as there is here. *Let not your hearts be tender* (so the word is) to receive all the impressions of fear, but let a believing confidence in the power and promise of God harden them. *Fear not and do not make haste*, (so the word is) for he that believeth doth not make more haste than good speed. Do not make haste either rashly to anticipate your advantages, or basely to fly off upon every disadvantage. (2.) He must assure them of the presence of God with them, to own and plead their righteous cause, and not only to save them from their enemies, but to give them victory over them, *ver. 4.* Note, Those have no reason to fear that have God with them. The giving of this encouragement by a priest, one of the lords ministers, intimates, (1.) That it is very fit that armies should have chaplains, not only to pray for them, but to preach to them, both to reprove that which would hinder their success, and to raise their hopes of it. (2.) That it is the work of Christ's ministers to encourage his good soldiers in their spiritual conflicts with the world and the flesh, and to assure them of a conquest, yea more than a conquest through Christ that loved us.

2. They that were indisposed to fight must be discharged; whether the indisposition did arise,

1. From the circumstances of a man's outward condition. As (1.) If he had lately built or purchased a new house, and had not taken possession of it, had not dedicated it, (*ver. 5.*) i. e. made a solemn festival for the entertainment of his friends, that came to him to welcome him to his house; let him go home and take the comfort of that which God had blessed him with, till by enjoying it for some time he became less fond of it, and consequently less disturbed in the war by the thoughts of it, and more willing to die and leave it. For that is the nature of all our worldly enjoyments, that they please us best at first; after a while we see the vanity of them. Some think this dedication of their houses was a religious act, that they took possession of them with prayers and praises, with a solemn devoting of themselves and all their enjoyments to the service and honour of God; David penned the 30th psalm, on this occasion, as appears by the title. Note, He that has a house of his own, should dedicate it to God, by setting up and keeping up the fear and worship of God in it, that he may have a church in his house; and nothing should be suffered to divert a man from this. Or, (2.) If a man had been at great expence to plant a vineyard, and longed to eat of the fruit of it, which for the first three years he was forbidden to do, by that law, *Lev. xix. 29, &c.* let him go home, if he has a mind, and gratify his own humour with the fruits of it, *ver. 9.* See how indulgent God

is to his people in innocent things, and how far from being a hard master. Since we naturally covet to eat the labour of our hands, rather than an Israelite should be crossed therein, his service in war shall be dispensed with. Or, (3.) If a man were made up to be married, and the marriage was not solemnized, he was at liberty to return, *ver. 7.* as also to tarry at home for one year after marriage, *chap. xxiv. 5.* for the terrors of war would be disagreeable to a man in love. And God would not be served in his wars by pressed men that were forced into the army against their will, but they must all be perfectly volunteers, *Psal. cx. 3.* *Thy people shall be willing.* In running the christian race, and fighting the good fight of faith, we must *lay aside every weight,* and all that which would clog and divert our minds, and make us unwilling. The Jewish writers agree that this liberty to return, was allowed only in those wars which they made voluntarily (as bishop Patrick expresseth it) not those which were made by the divine command against Amalek and the Canaanites, in which every man was bound to fight.

2. If a mans indisposition to fight arose from the weakness and timorousness of his own spirit, he had leave to return from the war, *ver. 8.* This proclamation Gideon made to his army, and it knocked off above two thirds of them, *Judg. vii. 3.* Some make this fearfulness and faint-heartedness here supposed, to arise from the terrors of an evil conscience, which would make a man afraid to look death and danger in the face. It was then thought that men of loose and profligate lives would not be good soldiers, but must needs be both cowards in an army, and curses to it; the shame and trouble of the camp, and therefore those who were conscious to themselves of notorious guilt were shaken off. But it seems rather to be meant of a natural fearfulness. It was partly in kindness to them that they had their discharge, that tho' they were shamed, yet they were eased; but much more in kindness to the rest of the army, who were not only hereby freed from the encumbrance of such as were useless and unserviceable, but the danger of infection from their cowardice and flight was prevented, that is the reason here given, *Left his brethrens heart fail as well as his heart.* Fear is catching, and in an army is of most pernicious consequence. We must take heed that we *fear not the fear of them that are afraid,* *Isa. viii. 12.*

Lastly, It is here ordered, that when all the cowards were dismissed, then captains should be nominated, *ver. 9.* for it was in a special manner necessary, that the leaders and commanders should be men of courage. That reform therefore must be made when the army was first mustered and marshalled. The soldiers of Christ have need of courage, that they may quit themselves like men, and endure hardness like good soldiers, especially the officers of his army.

10. ¶ When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. 11. And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be *that* all the people *that* is found therein, shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. 12. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it. 13. And when the LORD thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword. 14. But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, *even* all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thy self: and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the LORD thy God hath given thee. 15. Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities *which* are very far off from thee, which *are* not of the cities of these nations. 16. But of the cities of these people which the LORD thy God doth give thee *for* an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth: 17. But thou shalt utterly destroy them, *namely,* the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee: 18. That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods, so should ye sin against the LORD your God. 19. ¶ When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an ax against them: for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field is man's life) to employ *them* in the siege. 20. Only the trees which thou knowest that they *be* not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down; and thou shalt build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it be subdued.

They are here directed what method to take in dealing with the cities, (those only are mentioned, *ver. 10.* but doubtless the armies in the field, and the nations they had occasion to deal with, are

likewise intended,) upon which they made war. They must not make a descent upon any of their neighbours, till they had first given them fair notice, by a publick manifesto, or remonstrance of their quarrel with them. In dealing with the worst of enemies, the laws of justice and honour must be observed, and as the sword must never be taken in hand without cause; so not without cause shewn. War is an appeal in which the merits of the cause must be set forth. 1. Even to the proclamation of war must be subjoined a tender of peace, if they would accept of it upon reasonable terms. That is, (say the Jewish writers) upon condition that they renounce idolatry, worship the God of Israel, as proselytes of the gate, that were not circumcised, and that they pay to their new masters a yearly tribute, and submit to their government: on these terms the process of war should be stayed, and their conquerors, upon this submission, were to be their protectors, *ver. 10, 11.* Some think, that even the seven nations of Canaan were to have this offer of peace made them; and the offer was no jest or mockery, tho' *it was of the Lord to harden their hearts,* that they should not accept it, *Jesh. xi. 20.* Others think that they are excluded, *ver. 16.* not only from the benefit of that law, *ver. 13.* which confines military execution to the males only; but from the benefit of this also, which allows not to make war till peace was refused. And I see not how they could proclaim peace to those who, by the law, were to be utterly rooted out, and to whom they were to shew no mercy, *Deut. vii. 2.* But for any other nation which they made war upon, either for the enlarging of their coast, the avenging of any wrong done, or the recovery of any right denied; they must first proclaim peace to them. Let this shew, (1.) God's grace in dealing with sinners: tho' he might most justly and easily destroy them, yet having no pleasure in their ruin, he proclaims peace, and beseeches them to be reconciled; so that they, who lie most obnoxious to his justice, and ready to fall as sacrifices to it, if they make him an answer of peace, and open to him, upon condition they will be tributaries and servants to him, shall not only be saved from ruin, but incorporated with his Israel, as fellow-citizens with the saints. (2.) Let it shew us our duty in dealing with our brethren: if any quarrel happen, let us not only be ready to hearken to the proposals of peace, but forward to make such proposals. We should never make use of the law, till we have first tried to accommodate matters in variance amicably, and without expence and vexation. We must be for peace whoever are for war.

2. If the offers of peace were not accepted, then they must proceed to push on the war. And let those to whom God offers peace know, that if they reject the offer, and take not the benefit of it within the time limited, judgment will rejoyce against mercy in the execution, as much as now mercy rejoyceth against judgment in the reprieve. In this case here, (1.) There is a promise implied, that they should be victorious. It is taken for granted, *ver. 13.* that *the Lord their God would deliver it into their hands.* Note, Those enterprizes which we undertake by a divine warrant, and prosecute by divine direction, we may expect to succeed in. If we take God's method, we shall have his blessing. (2.) They are ordered, in honour, to the publick justice, to put all the soldiers to the sword, for them I understand, by every male, *ver. 13.* all that bore arms (as all then did that were able). But the spoil they are allowed to take to themselves, *ver. 14.* in which was accounted the women and children. Note, A justifiable property is acquired in that which is won in lawful war; God himself owns the title, *the Lord thy God gives it thee,* and therefore he must be owned in it, *Psal. xlv. 3.*

3. The nations of Canaan are excepted from the merciful provisions made by this law. Remnants might be left of the cities that were very far off, *ver. 15.* because, by them they were not in so much danger of being infected with idolatry; nor was their country so directly and immediately intended in the promise. But of the cities which were given to Israel for an inheritance, no remnants must be left of their inhabitants, *ver. 16.* for it put a slight upon the promise to admit Canaanites to share with them in the peculiar land of promise. And for another reason they must be utterly destroyed, *ver. 17.* Because since it could not be expected they should be cured of their idolatry, if they were left with that plague-fore upon them, they would be in danger of infecting God's Israel, who were too apt to take the infection, *ver. 18.* *They will teach you to do after their abominations,* to introduce their customs into the worship of the God of Israel, and by degrees to forsake him, and to worship false gods: for those that dare violate the second commandment, will not long keep to the first. Strange worships open the door to strange deities.

Lastly, Care is here taken, that in the besieging of cities, there should not be any destruction made of fruit-trees, *ver. 19, 20.* In those times when besiegers forced their way, not as now, with bombs and cannon-ball, but with battering-rams; they had occasion for much timber in carrying on their sieges: now because in the heat of war, men are not apt to consider as they ought, the publick good, it is expressly provided that fruit-trees should not be used as timber trees. That reason, *for the tree of the field is man's,* (the word life we suppl.) all the antient versions, the Septuagint, Targums, &c. read, *For is the tree of the field a man? Or, the tree of the field is not a man, that it should come against thee in the siege;*

flee; or, *retire from thee into the bulwark*. Do not brutishly vent thy rage against the trees that can do thee no harm. But our translation seems most agreeable to the intent of the law; and it teaches us, 1. That God is a better friend to man than he is to himself; and God's law, which we are apt to complain of as a heavy yoke, consults our interest and comfort, while our own appetites and passions, which we are so indulgent of, are really enemies to our welfare. The intent of many of the divine precepts is to restrain us from destroying that which is our life and food. 2. That armies, and their commanders, are not allowed to make what desolation they please in the countries that are the seat of war. Military rage must always be checked and ruled with reason. War, tho' carried on with never so much caution, is destructive enough, and needs not be made more so than needs must. Generous spirits will shew themselves tender, not only of mens lives, but of their livelihoods, for tho' *the life is more than meat*, yet it will soon be nothing without meat. 3. The Jews understand this as a prohibition of all wilful waste upon any account whatsoever. No fruit-tree is to be destroyed, unless it be barren and cumber the ground: Nay, they say, who so wilfully breaks vessels, tears clothes, stops wells, pulls down buildings, or destroys meat, transgresses this law, *Thou shalt not destroy*. Christ took care that the broken meat should be gathered up, that nothing might be lost. Every creature of God is good, and as nothing is to be refused, so nothing is to be abused. We may live to want what we carelessly waste.

C H A P. XXI.

In this chapter provision is made, 1. For the putting away of the guilt of blood from the land, when he that shed it was fled from justice, ver. 1—9. 2. For the preserving of the honour of a captive maid, ver. 12—14. 3. For the securing of the right of a first-born son, tho' he were not a favourite, ver. 15—17. 4. For the restraining and punishing of a rebellious son, ver. 18—21. 5. For the maintaining of the honour of human bodies, which must not be hanged in chains, but decently buried, even the bodies of the worst malefactors, ver. 22, 23.

1. **I**F one be found slain in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it, lying in the field, and it be not known who hath slain him: 2. Then thy elders and thy judges shall come forth, and they shall measure unto the cities which are round about him that is slain: 3. And it shall be that the city which is next unto the slain man, even the elders of that city shall take an heifer which hath not been wrought with, and which hath not drawn in the yoke. 4. And the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer unto a rough valley which is neither eared nor sown, and shall strike off the heifers neck there in the valley. 5. And the priests the sons of Levi shall come near (for them the LORD thy God hath chosen to minister unto him, and to bless in the name of the LORD) and by their word shall every controversy and every stroke be tried. 6. And all the elders of that city that are next unto the slain man, shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley. 7. And they shall answer and say, Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it. 8. Be merciful, O LORD, unto thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israels charge. And the blood shall be forgiven them. 9. So shalt thou put away the guilt of innocent blood from among you, when thou shalt do that which is right in the sight of the LORD.

Care had been taken by some preceding laws for the vigorous and effectual prosecution of a wilful murderer, chap. xix. 11. the putting of whom to death was the putting away of the guilt of blood from the land: but if that could not be done, the murderer not being discovered, they must not think the land was in no danger of contracting any pollution, since it was not through any neglect of theirs that the murderer was unpunished; no, a great solemnity is here provided for the putting away of the guilt, as an expression of their dread, and detestation of that sin.

1. The case supposed is, that one is found slain, and it is not known who slew him, ver. 1. The providence of God hath sometimes wonderfully brought to light these hidden works of darkness, and by strange occurrences the sin of the guilty has found them out; inasmuch, that it is become a proverb, *murder will out*: but it is not always so; now and then the devil's promises of secrecy and impunity in this world are made good; yet it is but for a while: there is a time coming, when secret murders will be discovered; the earth shall disclose her blood, Isa. xxvi. 21. upon the inquisition justice makes for it; and an eternity coming, when they that escaped punishment from men, will lie under the

righteous judgment of God. And the going of so many murderers and other wickednesses unpunished in this world, makes it necessary, that there should be a day of judgment, to require that which is past, Eccl. iii. 15.

2. Directions are given what is to be done in this case: It is taken for granted, that a diligent search had been made for the murderer, witnesses examined, and circumstances strictly enquired into, that if possible they might find out the guilty person; but if, after all, they could not trace it out, nor fasten the charge upon any, then, 1. The elders of the next city (that had a court of three and twenty in it) were to concern themselves about this matter. If it were doubtful which city was next, the great Sanhedrim were to send commissioners to determine that matter, by an exact measure, ver. 2, 3. Note, Publick persons must be solicitous about the publick good: and those that are in power and reputation in cities, must lay out themselves to redress grievances, and reform what is amiss in the country, and neighbourhood that lies about them. Those that are next to them should have the largest share of their good influence, as ministers of God for good.

2. The priests and Levites must assist, and preside in this solemnity, ver. 5. that they might direct the management of it, in all points according to the law, and particularly might be the peoples mouth to God, in the prayer that was to be put up on this sad occasion, ver. 8. God being Israel's king, his ministers must be their magistrates, and by their word, as the mouth of the court, and learned in the laws, every controversy must be tried. It was their privilege that they had such guides, overseers, and rulers, and their duty to make use of them upon all occasions, especially in sacred things, as this was.

3. They were to bring a heifer down into a rough and unoccupied valley, and to kill it there, ver. 3, 4. This was not a sacrifice, for it was not brought to the altar, but a solemn protestation, that thus they would put the murderer to death if they had him in their hands. The heifer must be one that had not drawn in the yoke, to signify (say some) that the murderer was a son of Belial; it must be done in a rough valley, to signify the horror of the fact, and that the defilement which blood brings upon a land, turns it into barrenness. And the Jews say, that unless, after this, the murderer was found out, this valley where the heifer was killed, was never to be tilled or sown.

4. The elders were to wash their hands in water over the heifer that was killed, and to profess, not only that they had not shed this innocent blood themselves, but that they knew not who had, (ver. 6, 7.) nor had knowingly concealed the murderer, helped him to make his escape, or had been any way aiding or abetting. To this custom David alludes, *Psal. xxvi. 6. I will wash my hands in innocency*; but if Pilate had any eye to it, *Mat. xxvii. 24.* he wretchedly misapplied it, when he condemned Christ, knowing him to be innocent, and yet acquitted himself from the guilt of innocent blood. *Protestatio non valet contra factum.*

5. The priests were to pray to God for the country and nation, that God would be merciful to them, and not bring upon them the judgments which the connivance at the sin of murder would deserve, ver. 8. it might be presumed, that the murderer was either one of their city, or was now harboured in their city, and therefore must pray, that they might not fare the worse for his being among them. *Num. xvi. 22. Be merciful, O Lord, to thy people Israel.* Note, When we hear of the wickedness of the wicked, we have need to cry earnestly to God for mercy for our land, which groans and trembles under it. We must empty the measure by our prayers, which others are filling by their sins.

Now this solemnity was appointed, (1.) That it might give occasion to common and publick discourse concerning the murder, which perhaps might some way or other occasion the discovery of it. (2.) That it might possess people with a dread of the guilt of blood. Not only how defiling it is to the conscience of him that sheds it, which should engage us all to pray with David, (*deliver me from blood-guiltiness*) but to the land in which it is shed. It cries to the magistrate for justice on the criminal, and if that cry be not heard, it cries to heaven for judgments on the land. If there must be so much ado to save the land from guilt when the murderer was not known, it was certainly impossible to secure it from guilt, if the murderer was known and yet protected. All would be taught by this solemnity, to use their utmost care and diligence, to prevent, discover, and punish murder. Even the heathen mariners dreaded the guilt of blood, *Jonah i. 14.* (3.) That we might all learn to take heed of partaking in other mens sins, and making our selves accessory to them *ex post facto*, by countenancing the sin or sinner, and no witnessing against it in our places. We have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, if we do not reprove them rather, and bear our testimony against them: the repentance of the church of Corinth for the sin of one of their members, produced such a carefulness, such a clearing of themselves, such a holy indignation, fear, and revenge, (2 Cor. vii. 11.) as was signified by the solemnity here appointed.

10. ¶ When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies, and the LORD thy God hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou hast taken them captive, 11. And seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldst have her to thy wife: 12. Then thou shalt bring her home to thine house, and she shall shave her head, and pair her nails. 13. And she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month: and after that, thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife. 14. And it shall be if thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will, but thou shalt not sell her at all for money, thou shalt not make merchandise of her, because thou hast humbled her.

By this law a soldier is allowed to marry his captive, if he pleased. For the hardness of their hearts Moses gave them this permission, lest if they not had liberty given them to marry such, they should have taken liberty to defile themselves with them, and by such wickedness the camp would have been troubled. The man is supposed to have a wife already, and to take this wife for a secondary wife, as the Jews called them. This indulgence of mens inordinate desires, in which their hearts walked after their eyes, is by no means agreeable to the law of Christ, which therefore in this respect, among others, far exceeds in glory the law of Moses. The gospel permits not him that had one wife, to take another, for from the beginning it was not so: the gospel forbids looking upon a woman, tho' a beautiful one, to lust after her, and commands the mortifying and denying of all irregular desires, tho' it be as uneasy as the cutting off of a right hand; so much doth our holy religion, more than that of the Jews, advance the honour and support the dominion of the soul over the body, the spirit over the flesh, consonant to the glorious discovery it makes of life and immortality, and the better hope.

But tho' military men were allowed this liberty, yet care is here taken that they should not abuse it, that is,

1. That they should not abuse themselves by doing it too hastily, tho' the captive was never so desirable. *If thou wouldst have her to thy wife*, ver. 10, 11. it is true, thou needest not ask her parents consent, for she is thy captive, and is at thy dispose. But, 1. Thou shalt not lie with her, till thou hast married her. This allowance was not designed to gratify a filthy brutish lust, in the heat and fury of its rebellion against reason and virtue; but an honourable and generous affection to a comely and amiable person, tho' in distress; therefore he may make her his wife if he will, but he must not *deal with her as with a harlot*. 2. Thou shalt not marry her of a sudden, but keep her a full month in thy house, ver. 12, 13. This he must do either, (1.) That he may try to take his affections off from her; for he must know, that tho' in marrying her he doth not do ill, (so the law then stood) yet letting her alone he doth much better. Let her therefore shave her head, that he might not be enamoured with her locks, and let her nails grow (so the margin reads it) to spoil the beauty of her hand. Note, We should contrive ways to take our affections off from those things we are tempted to love inordinately, *quicquid amas, cupias non placuisse nimis*. Or rather, (2.) This was done in token of her renouncing idolatry, and becoming a proselyte to the Jewish religion. The shaving of her head, and the paring of her nails, and the changing of her apparel, signified her putting off her former conversation, which was corrupt in her ignorance, that she might become a new creature. She must remain in his house to be taught the good knowledge of the Lord, and the worship of him, which (say the Jews) if she received not but continued obstinate in idolatry, he must not marry her. Note, The professors of religion must not be unequally yoked with unbelievers, 2 Cor. vi. 14.

2. It is likewise provided that they should not abuse the poor captive. 1. She must have time to *bewail her father and mother*, from whom she separated, and without whose consent and blessing she is now likely to be married, and perhaps to a common soldier of Israel, tho' in her country never so nobly born and bred. To force a marriage till these sorrows were digested, and in some measure got over, and she was better reconciled to the land of her captivity, by being better acquainted with it, would be very unkind. She must not bewail her idols, but be glad to part with them; to her near and dear relations only her affection must be thus indulged. 2. If upon second thoughts, he that had brought her to his house with a purpose to marry her, changed his mind and would not marry her, he might not make merchandise of her, as of his other prisoners, but must give her liberty, to return, if she pleased to her own country, because he had humbled her, and afflicted her, by raising expectations, and then disappointing them, ver. 14. having made a fool of her, he might not make a prey of her. This intimates how binding the laws of justice and honour are, particularly in the pretensions of love, the courting of affections, and

the promises of marriage, which are to be looked upon as solemn things that have something sacred in them, and therefore are not to be jested with.

15. ¶ If a man have two wives, one beloved and another hated, and they have born him children, *both* the beloved and the hated; and if the first-born son be hers that was hated: 16. Then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit *that* which he hath, *that* he may not make the son of the beloved, first-born, before the son of the hated, *which is indeed* the first-born: 17. But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated *for* the first-born, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he *is* the beginning of his strength, the right of the first-born *is* his.

This law restrains men from disinheriting their eldest sons, purely in a humour, and without just provocation.

1. The case here put, ver. 15. is very instructive. (1.) It shews the great mischief of having more wives than one, which the law of Moses did not restrain, probably in hopes that mens own experience of the great inconvenience of it in families, would at last put an end to it, and make them a law to themselves. Observe the supposition here, if a man have two wives, it is a thousand to one but one of them is beloved, and the other hated, *i. e.* manifestly loved less, as Leah was by Jacob, and the effect of this cannot but be strifes and jealousies, envy, confusion, and every evil work, which could not but create a constant uneasiness and vexation to the husband, and involve him both in sin and trouble. Those do much better consult their own present ease and satisfaction, who adhere to God's law, than those who indulge their own lusts. (2.) It shews how providence commonly sides with the weakest, and gives more abundant honour to that part which lacked, for the *first-born son* is here supposed to be *her's that was hated*, it was so in Jacob's family, because *the Lord saw that Leah was hated*, Gen. xxix. 31. The great householder wisely gives to each his dividend of comfort; if one had the honour to be the beloved wife, it oft proved, that the other had the honour to be the mother of the first-born.

2. The law in this case is still binding to parents, they must give their children their right without partiality. In the case supposed, the eldest son, tho' the son of the less beloved wife, must have his birthright privilege, which was a double portion of the estate, because he was the beginning of his strength, *i. e.* in him his family began to be strengthened, and his quiver began to be filled with the *arrows of a mighty man*, Psal. cxxvii. 4. and therefore the *right of the first born is his*, ver. 16, 17. Jacob had indeed deprived Reuben of his birthright, and given it to Joseph, but it was because Reuben had forfeited the birthright by his incest, not because he was the *son of the hated*: now lest that which Jacob did justly should be drawn into a precedent, for others to do the same thing unjustly, it is here provided, that when the father makes his will, or otherwise settles his estate, the child shall not fare the worse for the mother's unhappiness in having less of her husband's love, for that was not the child's fault. Note, 1. Parents ought to make no other difference in dispensing their affections among their children, than what they see plainly God makes in dispensing his grace among them. 2. Since it is the providence of God that makes heirs, the disposal of providence in that matter must be acquiesced in, and not opposed. No son should be abandoned by his father, till he manifestly appear to be abandoned of God, which is hard to say of any while there is life.

18. ¶ If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and *that* when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: 19. Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; 20. And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son *is* stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; *he is* a glutton, and a drunkard. 21. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you, and all Israel shall hear, and fear. 22. ¶ And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: 23. His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day (for he that is hanged, *is* accursed of God) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance.

Here is; 1. A law for the punishing of a rebellious son. Having in the former law provided, that parents should not deprive their children of their right, it was fit it should next be provided, that children withdraw not the honour and duty that is

owing to their parents, for there is no partiality in the divine law.

1. Observe, how the criminal is here described. He is a *stubborn and rebellious son*, ver. 18. No child was to fare the worse for the weakness of his capacity, the slowness or dullness of his understanding, but for his wilfulness and obstinacy. If he carry himself proudly and insolently towards his parents, contemn their authority, slight their reproofs and admonitions, disobey the express commands they give him for his own good, hate to be reformed by the correction they give him, shame their family, grieve their hearts, waste their substance, and threaten to ruin their estate by riotous living, this is a *stubborn and rebellious son*. He is particularly supposed, ver. 20. to be a *glutton or a drunkard*. This intimates either, (1.) That these were sins which his parents did in a particular manner warn him against, and therefore in these instances there was a plain evidence, that he did not obey their voice. Lemuel had this charge from his mother, *Prov. xxxi. 4.* Note, In the education of children great care should be taken both to suppress all inclinations to drunkenness, and to keep them out of the way of temptations to it; in order hereunto they should be possessed betimes with a dread and detestation of that beastly sin, and taught betimes to deny themselves. Or, (2.) That his being a *glutton and a drunkard* was the cause of his insolence and obstinacy towards his parents. Note, There is nothing that draws men into all manner of wickedness, and hardens them in it more certainly and fatally, than drunkenness doth. When men take to drink, they forget the law, they forget all law, (*Prov. xxxi. 5.*) even that fundamental law of honouring parents.

2. How this criminal is to be proceeded against. His own father and mother, are to be his prosecutors, ver. 19, 20. They might not put him to death themselves, but they must complain of him to the elders of the city, and the complaint must needs be made with a sad heart, *this our son is stubborn and rebellious*. Note, Those that give up themselves to vice and wickedness, and will not be reclaimed, forfeit their interest in the natural affections of their nearest relations; the instruments of their being justly become the instruments of their destruction. The children that forget their duty must thank themselves and not blame their parents, if they forget their love. And how difficult soever tender parents now find it to reconcile themselves to the just punishment of their rebellious children, in the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God, all natural affection will be so entirely swallowed up in divine love, that they will be very well content to see them damned, because God will be therein for ever glorified.

3. What judgment is to be executed upon him, he must be publickly *stoned to death by the men of his city*, ver. 21. And thus (1.) The parental authority was supported, and God, our common Father, shewed himself jealous for it, it being one of the first and most ancient stream derived from him that is the fountain of all power. (2.) This law, if duly executed, would *early destroy the wicked of the land*, Psal. ci. 8. and prevent the spreading of the gangreen by cutting off the corrupt part betimes; for those that were ill members of families would never make good members of the common-wealth. (3.) It would strike an awe upon children, and frighten them into obedience to their parents, if they would not otherwise be brought to their duty, and kept in it. All Israel shall hear. The Jews say, the elders that condemned him were to send notice of it in writing all the nation over, *in such a court, such a day, we stoned such a one, because he was a stubborn and rebellious son*. And I have sometimes wished, that as in all our courts there is an exact record kept of the condemnation of criminals in *perpetuam rei memoriam*, so there might be publick and authentick notice given in print to the kingdom, of such condemnations, and the executions upon them, by the elders themselves, in *terrorem*, that all may hear and fear.

2. A law for the burying of the bodies of malefactors that were hanged, ver. 22. The hanging of them by the neck till the body was dead was not used at all among the Jews, as with us, but such as were stoned to death, if it were for blasphemy, or some other very execrable crime, it was usual, by order of the judges, to hang up the dead body upon a post, for some time, as a spectacle to the world, to express the ignominy of the crime, and to strike the greater terror upon others, that they might not only hear and fear, but see and fear. Now it is here provided that whatever time of the day they were thus hung up, at sun-set they should be taken down and buried, and not left to hang out all night; sufficient (saith the law) *to such a man is this punishment*; hitherto let it go but no further. Let the malefactor and his crime be hid in the grave.

Now, 1. God, would thus preserve the honour of human bodies, and the tenderness towards the worst of criminals. The time of exposing of dead bodies thus is limited, for the same reason that the number of stripes was limited by another law, *lest thy brother seem vile unto thee*. Punishing beyond death God reserves to himself, as for man there is no more that he can do. Whether therefore the hanging of malefactors in chains, and setting up their heads and quarters be decent among Christians that look for the resurrection of the body, may perhaps be worth considering. 2. Yet

it is plain there was something ceremonial in it; by the law of Moses, the touch of a dead body was defiling, and therefore dead bodies must not be left hanging up in the country, because by the same rule that would defile the land. But 3. There is one reason here given which has reference to Christ, *he that is hanged is accursed of God*, i. e. it is the highest degree of disgrace and reproach that can be done to a man, and proclaims him under the curse of God as much as any external punishment can. They that see him thus hang between heaven and earth will conclude him abandoned of both, and unworthy of either; and therefore let him not hang all night, for that will carry it too far. Now the apostle shewing how Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, by being himself made a curse for us, illustrates it by comparing this brand here put on him that was hanged on a tree with the death of Christ, Gal. iii. 13. Moses in spirit uses this phrase of being *accursed of God*, when he means no more than being treated most ignominiously, that it might afterwards be applied to the death of Christ, and might shew that in it he underwent the curse of the law for us, which is a great enhancement of his love, and a great encouragement to our faith in him. And (as the excellent bishop Patrick well observes) this passage is applied to the death of Christ, not only because he bare our sins and was exposed to shame, as these malefactors were that were accursed of God, but that he was in the evening taken down from the cursed tree and buried, (and that by the particular care of the Jews, with an eye to this law, John xix. 31.) in token that now the guilt was removed, the law was satisfied, as it was when the malefactor had hanged till sun-set; it demanded no more. Then he ceased to be a curse, and those that are his. And as the land of Israel was pure and clean, when the dead body was buried, so the church is washed and cleansed by the compleat satisfaction, which thus Christ made.

C H A P. XXII.

The laws of this chapter do provide, 1. For the preservation of charity and good neighbourhood, in the care of stray or fallen cattle, ver. 1—4. 2. For the preservation of order and distinction; that men and women should not wear one anothers clothes, ver. 5. and that other needful mixtures should be avoided, ver. 9—11. 3. For the preservation of birds, ver. 6, 7. 4. Of life, ver. 8. 5. Of the commandments, ver. 12. 6. Of the reputation of a wife abused, if she were innocent, ver. 13—19. but for her punishment if guilty, ver. 20, 21. 7. For the preservation of the chastity of wives, ver. 22. Virgins betrothed, ver. 23—27. or not betrothed, ver. 28, 29. And lastly, against incest, ver. 30.

1. **T**HOU shalt not see thy brothers ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thy self from them: thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother. 2. And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it unto thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to him again. 3. In like manner shalt thou do with his ass, and so shalt thou do with his raiment, and with all lost things of thy brothers, which he hath lost, and thou hast found, shalt thou do likewise; thou mayest not hide thy self. 4. ¶ Thou shalt not see thy brothers ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thy self from them: thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again.

The kindness that was commanded to be shewn in reference to an enemy, *Exod. xxiii. 4, &c.* is here required to be much more done for a neighbour, tho' he were not an Israelite, for the law is consonant to natural equity.

1. That stray cattle should be brought back either to the owner or to the pasture, out of which they had gone astray, ver. 1, 2. This must be done in pity to the very cattle, which while they wandered were exposed; and in civility and respect to the owner, nay and in justice to him, for it was doing as we would be done by, which is one of the fundamental laws of equity. Note, Religion teaches us to be neighbourly, and to be ready to do all good offices, as we have opportunity, to all men. In doing this, 1. They must not stick at pains, but if they knew who the owner was, must bring it back themselves, for if they should only send notice to the owner to come and look after it himself, some mischief might befall it ere he could reach it. 2. They must not stick at charge; but if they knew not who the owner was, must take it home, and feed it till the owner was found. If such care must be taken of a neighbour's ox or ass going astray, much more of himself if he go astray from God and his duty, we should do our utmost to convert him, *Jam. v. 19.* and restore him, considering our selves, *Gal. vi. 1.*

2. That lost goods should be brought to the owner, ver. 3. The Jews say, He that found the lost goods was to give publick notice of them by the common crier three or four times according to the usage with us; if the owner could not be found, he that found

found the goods might convert them to his own use, but (say some learned writers in this case) he would do very well to give the value of the goods to the poor.

3. That cattle in distress should be helped, *ver.* 4. This must be done both in compassion to the brute creatures, for a *merciful man regardeth the life of a beast*, tho' it be not his own, and in love and friendship to our neighbour, not knowing how soon we may have occasion for his help. If one member may say to another, I have at present no need of thee, it cannot say, I never shall.

5. ¶ The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God. 6. ¶ If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way in any tree, or on the ground, *whether they be young ones, or eggs*, and the dam sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young. 7. But thou shalt in any wise let the dam go, and take the young to thee, that it may be well with thee, and *that thou mayest prolong thy days*. 8. ¶ When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence. 9. ¶ Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds: lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard be defiled. 10. ¶ Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together. 11. ¶ Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, as of woollen and linen together. 12. ¶ Thou shalt make thee fringes upon the four quarters of thy vesture, wherewith thou coverest thyself.

Here are several laws in these verses which seem to stoop very low, and to take cognizance of things mean and minute; mens laws commonly do not so; *de minimis non curat lex*; but because God's providence extendeth it self to the smallest affairs, his precepts do so, that even in them, we may be *in the fear of the Lord*, as we are under his eye and care. And yet the significancy and tendency of these statutes which seem little is such, as that notwithstanding them the things of God's law, which he has written to us are to be accounted great things.

1. The distinction of sexes by the apparel is to be kept up, for the preservation of our own, and our neighbour's chastity, *ver.* 5. *Nature it self teaches*, that a difference be made between them in their hair, 1 Cor. xi. 14. and by the same rule, in their clothes, which therefore ought not to be confounded, either in ordinary wear or upon occasion. To befriend a lawful escape or concealment it may be done; but whether for sport, or in the acting of plays, is justly questionable. (1.) Some think it refers to the idolatrous customs of the Gentiles: In the worship of Venus, women appeared in armour, and men in women's clothes; this, as other such superstitious usages, is here said to be *an abomination to the Lord*. (2.) It forbids the confounding of the dispositions and affairs of the sexes: men must not be effeminate, nor do the women work in the house, nor must women be viragos, pretend to teach or usurp authority, 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12. (3.) Probably, this confounding of garments had been used to gain opportunity of committing uncleanness, and is therefore forbidden: for those that would be kept from sin must keep themselves from all occasions of it, and approaches to it.

2. In taking a bird's nest, the dam must be let go, *ver.* 6, 7. The Jews say, this is the least of all the commandments of the law of Moses, and yet the same promise is here made to the observance of it, that is made to the keeping of the fifth commandment, which is one of the greatest, *that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days*: for as disobedience in a small matter, shews a very great contempt of the law; so obedience in a small matter, shews a very great regard to it. He that let go a bird out of his hand (which was worth two in the bush) purely because God bid him; in that made it to appear, that he esteemed all God's precepts concerning all things to be right, and that he could deny himself rather than sin against God. But doth God take care for birds? 1 Cor. ix. 9. Yes, certainly; and perhaps to this law our Saviour alludes, Luke xii. 6. *Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?* This law, (1.) Forbids us to be cruel to the brute-creatures, or to take a pleasure in destroying them. Tho' God has made us wiser than the fowls of heaven, and given us dominion over them, yet we must not abuse them, nor rule them with rigour. Let go the dam to breed again; destroy it not, for a blessing is in it, Isa. lxv. 8. (2.) It teaches us compassion to those of our own kind, and to abhor the thought of every thing that looks barbarous and cruel, and ill-natured, especially towards those of the weaker and tenderer sex, which always ought to be treated with the utmost respect, in consideration of the sorrows wherein they bring forth children. It is spoken of as an instance of the most inhuman cruelty, that the mother was dashed to pieces upon her children, Hos. x. 14. and that

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the women with child were ript up, Amos i. 13. (3.) It further intimates, that we must not take advantage against any, from their natural affection, and the tenderness of their disposition, to do them an injury. The dam could not have been taken, if her concern for her eggs or young (unlike to the ostrich) had not detained her upon the nest, when otherwise she could easily have secured herself by flight. Now, since it is a thousand pities she should fare the worse for that which is her praise, the law takes care that she shall be let go. The remembrance of this may, perhaps some time or other, keep us from doing a hard or unkind thing to those we have at our mercy.

3. In building a house, care must be taken to make it safe, that none might receive mischief by falling from it, *ver.* 8. The roofs of their houses were flat for people to walk on, as appears by many scriptures; now lest any, through carelessness, should fall off them, they must compass them with battlements, which (the Jews say) must be three foot and a half high; if this were not done, and mischief followed; the owner, by his neglect, brought the guilt of blood upon his house. See here, (1.) How precious mens lives are to God, who protects them not only by his providence, but by his law. (2.) How precious therefore they ought to be to us, and what care we should take to prevent hurt from coming to any person. The Jews say, that by the equity of this law, they were obliged (and so are we too) to fence, or remove every thing by which life may be endangered, as to cover draw-wells, keep bridges in repair, and the like; lest if any perish through our omission, their blood be required at our hand.

4. Odd mixtures are here forbidden, *ver.* 8, 9, 10. much of this we met with before, *Lev.* xix. 19. There appears not any thing at all of moral evil in these things, and therefore we now make no conscience of sowing wheat and rye together, plowing with horses and oxen together, and of wearing linsey-woolsey garments; but hereby is forbidden either, (1.) A conformity to some idolatrous customs of the heathen. Or, (2.) That which is contrary to the plainness and purity of an Israelite. They must not gratify their own vanity and curiosity by putting those things together, which the Creator in infinite wisdom had made asunder: They must not be unequally yoked with unbelievers; nor mingle themselves with the unclean, as an ox with an ass. Nor must their profession and appearance in the world be motley, or party-coloured, but all of a piece, all of a kind.

5. The law concerning fringes upon their garments, and memorandums of the commandments, which we had before, *Numb.* xv. 38, 39. is here repeated, *ver.* 12. By these they were distinguished from other people, so that it might be said, upon the first sight, there goes an Israelite; which taught them not to be ashamed of their country, or the peculiarities of their religion, how much soever their neighbours looked upon them and it with contempt: and they were also put in mind of the precepts, upon the particular occasions to which they had reference; and perhaps this law is repeated here, because the precepts immediately foregoing seemed so minute, that they were in danger of being overlooked and forgotten. The fringes will mind you not to make your garments of linen and woollen, *ver.* 11.

13. ¶ If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her, 14. And give occasion of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid: 15. Then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth the tokens of the damsel's virginity, unto the elders of the city in the gate. 16. And the damsel's father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her, 17. And lo, he hath given occasions of speech against her, saying, I found not thy daughter a maid; and yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity: and they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. 18. And the elders of that city shall take that man and chastise him. 19. And they shall amerce him in an hundred shekels of silver, and give them unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel: and she shall be his wife, he may not put her away all his days. 20. But if this thing be true, and the tokens of virginity be not found for the damsel: 21. Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you. 22. ¶ If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel. 23. ¶ If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her: 24. Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall

shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, *being* in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbours wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you. 25. ¶ But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her: then the man only that lay with her, shall die. 26. But unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing, *there is* in the damsel no sin *worthy* of death: for as when a man riseth against his neighbour, and slayeth him, even so is this matter. 27. For he found her in the field, *and* the betrothed damsel cried, and *there was* none to save her. 28. ¶ If a man find a damsel *that is* a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found: 29. Then the man that lay with her, shall give unto the damsel's father fifty *shekels* of silver, and she shall be his wife, because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days. 30. ¶ A man shall not take his father's wife, nor discover his father's skirt.

These laws relate to the seventh commandment, laying a restraint by laying a penalty upon those fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.

1. If a man, lusting after another woman, to get rid of his wife, slander her, and falsely accuse her, as not having the virginity she pretended to when he married her, upon the disproof of his slander, he must be punished, *ver. 15—19*. What the meaning of that evidence is, by which the husband's accusation was to be proved false, the learned are not agreed, nor is it at all necessary to enquire; they for whom this law was intended, no doubt understood it; it is sufficient for us to know, that this wicked husband, who had thus endeavoured to ruin the reputation of his own wife, was to be scourged, and fined, and bound out from ever divorcing the wife he had thus abused, *ver. 18, 19*. Upon this dislike of her, he might have divorced her if he had pleased, by the permission of the law, *chap. xxiv. 1*. but then he must have given her her dowry: if therefore to save that, and to do her the greater mischief, he would thus put her into an ill name, it was fit he should be severely punished for it, and for ever after lose the benefit of the permission of a divorce. Observe, (1.) The nearer any are in relation to us, the greater sin it is to bely them, and blemish their reputation. It is spoken of as a crime of the highest nature to *slander their own mothers son*, (*Psal. l. 20.*) who is next to thyself, much more to slander thine own wife, or thine own husband, that is thyself. It is an ill bird indeed that defiles its own nest. (2.) Chastity is honour as well as virtue, and that which gives occasion for the suspicion of it, as great a reproach and disgrace, as any other whatsoever: in this matter therefore, above any thing, we should be highly tender, both of our own good name and others. (3.) Parents must look upon themselves as concerned to vindicate the reputation of their children, for it is a branch of their own.

2. If the woman that was married as a virgin were not found so, she was to be stoned to death at her father's door, *ver. 20, 21*. If the uncleanness was committed before she was betrothed, it would not have been punished as a capital crime; but she must die for the abuse she put upon him whom she married, being conscious to her self of her being defiled, while she made him believe her to be a chaste and modest woman. But some think her uncleanness was punished with death, only in case it was committed after she was betrothed, supposing there were few come to maturity but what were betrothed, tho' not yet married. Now, (1.) This gave a mighty powerful caution to young women to flee fornication, since, however concealed before, so as not to mar their marriage, it would very likely be discovered after to their perpetual infamy and utter ruin. (2.) It is intimated to parents, that they must by all means possible preserve their children's chastity, by giving them good advice and admonition, setting them good examples, keeping them from ill company, praying for them, and laying them under needful restraints; because, if the children committed lewdness, the parents must have the grief and shame of the execution at their own door. That phrase of *folly wrought in Israel*, was used concerning this very crime in the case of Dinah, *Gen. xxxiv. 7*. All sin is folly, uncleanness especially; but above all, uncleanness in Israel, by profession a holy people.

3. If any man, single or married, lay with a married woman, they were both to be put to death, *ver. 22*. This law we had before, *Lev. xx. 10*. For a married man to lie with a single woman, was not a crime of so high a nature, nor was it punished with death, because not introducing a spurious brood into families, under the character of legitimate children.

4. If a damsel were betrothed, and not married, she was from under the eye of her intended husband, and therefore she and her chastity were taken under the special protection of the law. (1.) If her chastity were violated by her own consent, she was to be put to death, and her adulterer with her, *ver. 23, 24*. And it shall be presumed she consented, if it were done in the city, or in any place where, had she cried out, help might speedily have come

in to prevent the injury offered her. *Qui tacet consentire videtur*. Note, It may be presumed, that those willingly yield to a temptation, (whatever they pretend) who will not use the means and helps they might be furnished with to avoid and overcome it. Nay, her being found in the city, a place of company and diversion, when she should have kept under the protection of her father's house, was an evidence against her, that she had not that dread of the sin, and the danger of it, which became a modest woman.

Note, They that needlessly expose themselves to temptation, justly suffer for the same, if, ere they are aware, they be surprized, and caught by it. Dinah lost her honour to gratify her curiosity with a sight of the *daughters of the land*. By this law the Virgin Mary was in danger of being made a publick example, that is, of being stoned to death, but that God, by an angel, cleared the matter to Joseph. (2.) If she were forced, and never consented, he that committed the rape was to be put to death, but the damsel was to be acquitted, *ver. 25, 26, 27*. Now if it were done in the field, out of the hearing of neighbours, it shall be presumed that she cried out, but there was none to save her; and besides, her going into the field, a place of solitude, did not so much expose her. Now by this law it is intimated to us, 1. That we shall suffer only for the wickedness we do, not for that which is done unto us. That is no sin which has not more or less of the will in it: 2. That we must presume the best, concerning all persons, unless the contrary do appear, not only charity but equity teaches us to do so. Tho' none heard her cry, yet, because none could hear it if she did, it shall be taken for granted that she did. This rule we should go by in judging of persons and actions, *believe all things, and hope all things*. 3. That our chastity should be as dear to us as our life, when that is assaulted; it is not at all improper to cry murder, murder, for *as when a man riseth against his neighbour and slayeth him, even so is this matter*. 4. By way of allusion to this, see what we are to do when Satan sets upon us with his temptations, wherever we are let us cry aloud to heaven for help, (*succurre, Domine, vim patior*) and there we may be sure to be heard, and answered, as Paul was, *My grace is sufficient for thee*.

5. If a damsel not betrothed be thus abused by violence, he that abused her should be fined, the father should have the fine, and if he and the damsel did consent, he should be bound to marry her, and never to divorce her, how much soever she was below him, and how unpleasing soever she might afterwards be to him, as Tamar was to Amnon, after he forced her, *ver. 28, 29*. This was to deter men from such vicious practices, which it is a shame that we are necessitated to read and write of.

6. The law against a man's marrying his father's widow, or having any undue familiarity with his father's wife, is here repeated, *ver. 30*. from *Lev. xviii. 8*. And, probably, it is intended (as bishop Patrick notes) for a short memorandum to them carefully to observe all the laws there made against incestuous marriages, this being instanced in which is the most detestable of all; it is that of which the apostle saith, *It is not so much as named among the Gentiles*, 1 Cor. v. 1.

C H A P. XXIII.

The laws of this chapter do provide, 1. For the preserving of the purity and honour of the families of Israel, by excluding such as would be a disgrace to them, *ver. 1—8*. 2. For the preserving of the purity and honour of the camp of Israel when it was abroad, *ver. 9—14*. 3. For the encouraging and entertaining of deserters, *ver. 15, 16*. 4. Against whoredom, *ver. 17, 18*. 5. Against usury, *ver. 19, 20*. 6. Against the breach of vows, *ver. 21—23*. 7. What liberty a man might take in his neighbours field and vineyard, and what not, *ver. 24, 25*.

1. **H**E that is wounded in the stones, or hath his privy member cut off, shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD. 2. A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD: even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the LORD. 3. An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever: 4. Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt: and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee. 5. Nevertheless, the LORD thy God would not hearken unto Balaam: but the LORD thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the LORD thy God loved thee. 6. Thou shalt not seek their peace, nor their prosperity all thy days for ever. 7. ¶ Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite, for he is thy brother: thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian, because thou wast a stranger in his land. 8. The children that are begotten of them, shall enter into the congregation of the LORD in their third generation.

Interpreters are not agreed what is here meant by *entring into the congregation of the Lord*, which is forbidden to eunuchs and to bastards, Ammonites and Moabites for ever, but to Edomites and Egyptians, only till the third generation. 1. Some think they are hereby excluded from communicating with the people of God in their religious services; tho' eunuchs and bastards were owned as members of the church, and the Ammonites and Moabites might be circumcised and profelyted to the Jewish religion; yet they, and their families, must lie for some time under marks of disgrace, remembring the rock whence they were hewn, and must not come so near the sanctuary as others might; nor have so free a communion with Israelites. 2. Others think they are hereby excluded from bearing office in the congregation: none of these must be elders or judges, lest the honour of the magistracy should thereby be stained. 3. Others think they are excluded only from marrying with Israelites. Thus the learned bishop Patrick inclines to understand it; yet we find, that when this law was put in execution after the captivity, they separated from Israel, not only the strange wives, but all the mixed multitude, see *Neh. xiii. 1, 2, 3.* With the daughters of these nations (tho' out of the nations of Canaan) it should seem the men of Israel might marry, if they were compleatly profelyted to the Jewish religion; but with the men of these nations the daughters of Israel might not marry, nor could they be naturalized, except as here excepted.

It is plain in general, that disgrace is here put; 1. Upon bastards and eunuchs, *ver. 1, 2.* By bastards here, the Jewish writers understand, not all that were born of fornication, or out of marriage; but all that were of those incestuous mixtures which are forbidden, *Lev. xviii.* And tho' it was not the fault of the issue, yet to deter people from those unlawful marriages, and unlawful lusts, it was very convenient, that their posterity should thus be made infamous. By this rule Jephtha, tho' the son of a harlot; a strange woman, (*Judg. xi. 1, 2.*) yet was not a bastard in the sense of this law. And for the eunuchs; tho' by this law they seemed to be cast out of the vineyard as dry trees, which they complain of, *Isa. lvi. 3.* yet it is there promised, *ver. 5.* that if they took care of their duty to God, as far as they were admitted, by keeping his sabbaths, and chusing the things that pleased him, the want of this privilege should be made up to them with such spiritual blessings as would entitle them to an everlasting name.

2. Upon Ammonites and Moabites, the posterity of Lot, who for his outward convenience had separated himself from Abraham, *Gen. xiii. 11.* And we do not find that he or his ever joined themselves again to the children of the covenant. They are here cut off to the tenth generation, that is, (as some think it is explained) for ever. Compare *Neh. xiii. 1.* The reason of this quarrel Israel must have with them, so as not to seek their peace, *ver. 6.* is, because of the unkindnesses they had now lately done to the camp of Israel, notwithstanding the orders God had given, not to distress or vex them, *Deut. ii. 9, 19.* (1.) It was bad enough that they did not meet them with bread and water in the way, *ver. 4.* that they did not, as allies, or at least as neutral states, bring victuals into their camp, which they should have been duly paid for. It was well God's Israel did not need their kindness, God himself following them with bread and water: However this omission of the Ammonites should be remembred against their nation in future ages. Note, God will certainly reckon, not only with those that oppose his people, but with those that do not help and further them, when it is in the power of their hand to do it. The charge at the great day is for an omission, I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat. (2.) The Moabites had done worse, they hired Balaam to curse them, *ver. 4.* It is true, God turned the curse into a blessing, *ver. 5.* not only changing the word in Balaam's mouth, but making that really to turn to the honour and advantage of Israel, which was designed for their ruin. But tho' the design was defeated and over-ruled for good, the Moabites wickedness was not the less provoking. God will deal with sinners, not only according to their deeds, but according to their endeavours, *Psal. xxviii. 4.*

3. The Edomites and Egyptians have not so much mark of displeasure put upon them, as the Moabites and Ammonites had. If an Edomite or Egyptian turned profelyte, his grand-children should be looked upon as members of the congregation of the Lord to all intents and purposes, *ver. 7, 8.* We would think the Edomites had been more injurious to Israel than the Ammonites, and deserved as little favour from them, *Numb. xx. 20.* and yet thou shalt not abhor an Edomite, as thou must an Ammonite, for he is thy brother. Note, The unkindnesses of near relations, tho' by many worst taken, yet should with us, for that reason, because of the relation, be first forgiven. And then as to the Egyptians, here is a strange reason given why they must not be abhorred, thou wast a stranger in their land, and therefore, tho' hardly used there, be civil to them, for old acquaintance sake. They must not remember their bondage in Egypt, for the keeping up of any ill will to the Egyptians, but only for the magnifying of God's power and goodness in their deliverance.

9. ¶ When the host goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing. 10. If there be among you any man that is not clean, by reason of

uncleanness that chanceth him by night, then shall he go abroad out of the camp, he shall not come within the camp. 11. But it shall be when evening cometh on, he shall wash himself with water: and when the sun is down, he shall come into the camp again. 12. ¶ Thou shalt have a place also without the camp, whither thou shalt go forth abroad. 13. And thou shalt have a paddle upon thy weapon: and it shall be when thou wilt ease thyself abroad, thou shalt dig therewith, and shalt turn back and cover that which cometh from thee. 14. For the LORD thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee: therefore shall thy camp be holy, that he see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee.

Israel was now encamped; and this vast army was just entring upon action, which was likely to keep them together for a long time, and therefore it was fit to give them particular directions for the good ordering of their camp. And the charge is in one word to be clean: They must take care to keep their camp pure from moral, ceremonial, and natural pollution.

1. From moral pollution, *ver. 9.* When the host goes forth against thine enemy, then look upon thy self as in a special manner engaged to keep thy self from every evil thing. (1.) The soldiers themselves must take heed of sin, for sin takes off the edge of valour; guilt makes men cowards. They that put their lives in their hands are concerned to make and keep their peace with God, and preserve conscience void of offence, then may they look death in the face without terror. Soldiers, in executing their commission, must keep themselves from gratifying the lusts of malice, covetousness or uncleanness, for those are wicked things; must keep themselves from the idols, or accursed things, they found in the camps they plundered. (2.) Even they that tarried at home, the body of the people, and every particular person, must at that time especially keep from every wicked thing, lest by sin they provoke God to withdraw his presence from the host; and give victory to the enemy for the correcting of his own people. Times of war should be times of reformation, else how can we expect God should hear and answer our prayers for success? *Psal. lxvi. 18.* See *1 Sam. vii. 3.*

2. From ceremonial pollution, which befel a man in the night against his will, for which he was bound to wash his flesh in water, and look upon himself as unclean until the even, *Lev. xv. 16.* A soldier, notwithstanding the constant service and duty he had to do in the camp, must be so far from looking upon himself as discharged from the observance of that ceremony, that more was required from him then than at another time; had he been at his own house he needed only to wash his flesh, but being in the army he must go abroad out of the camp as one concerned to keep it pure, and ashamed of his own impurity, and not return till after sun-set, *ver. 10, 11.* By this trouble and reproach which even involuntary pollutions exposed men to, they were taught to keep up a very great dread of all fleshly lusts. It were well if military men would consider this.

3. From natural pollution; they must go out of the camp to ease nature, and must take care to cover their excrements, *ver. 12, 13, 14.* It is strange that the divine law, or at least the solemn order and direction of Moses, should extend to a thing of this nature; but the design of it was to teach them, (1.) Modesty, and a good decorum; nature itself teaches men, thus to distinguish themselves from beasts, that know no shame. (2.) Cleanliness and (tho' not niceness yet) neatness, even in their camp: Nastiness is offensive to the senses God has endued us with, prejudicial to the health, a wrong to the comfort of human life, and an evidence of a careless slothful temper of mind. (3.) Purity from the pollutions of sin; if there must be this care taken to preserve the body clean and sweet, much more should we be solicitous to keep the mind so. (4.) A reverence of the divine majesty. This is the reason here given, for the Lord thy God walketh by his ark, the special token of his presence, in the midst of thy camp, with respect to that external symbol, this external purity is required, which (tho' not insisted on in the letter when that reason ceaseth, yet) teacheth us to preserve inward purity of soul, in consideration of the eye of God which is always upon us. By this expression of respect to the presence of God among them, they were taught both to fortify themselves against sin, and to encourage themselves against their enemies with the consideration of that presence. (5.) A regard one to another. The filthiness of one is noisome to many, this law of cleanliness therefore teaches us not to do that which will be justly offensive to our brethren, and grieve them. It is a law against nufances.

15. ¶ Thou shalt not deliver unto his master, the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee. 16. He shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose, in one of thy gates where it liketh him best: thou shalt not oppress him. 17. ¶ There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a Sodomite

domite of the sons of Israel. 18. Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog into the house of the LORD thy God for any vow: for even both these are abomination unto the LORD thy God. 19. ¶ Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury. 20. Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury, but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand to, in the land whither thou goest to possess it. 21. ¶ When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee. 22. But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee. 23. That which is gone out of thy lips, thou shalt keep and perform; even a free-will-offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the LORD thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth. 24. ¶ When thou comest into thy neighbours vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes thy fill, at thine own pleasure; but thou shalt not put any in thy vessel. 25. When thou comest into the standing-corn of thy neighbours, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand: but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbours standing-corn.

Orders are here given about five several things which have no relation one to another.

1. The land of Israel is here made a sanctuary, or city of refuge, for servants that were wronged and abused by their masters, and fled thither for shelter from the neighbouring countries, ver. 15, 16. We cannot suppose that they were hereby obliged to give entertainment to all the rogues that out-run their services. Israel needed not (as Rome at first did) to be thus peopled. But, 1. They must not deliver up the trembling servant to his enraged master, till upon trial it appeared that the servant had wronged his master, and was justly liable to punishment. Note, It is an honourable thing to shelter and protect the weak, provided they be not wicked. God doth allow his people should patronize the oppressed. The angel bid Hagar return to her mistress, and St Paul sent Onesimus back to his master Philemon, because they had neither of them any cause to go away, nor were either of them in any danger in returning. But the servant here is supposed to escape, i. e. to run for his life, to the people of Israel, of whom he had heard (as Benhadad of the kings of Israel, 1 Kings xx. 31.) that they were a merciful people, to save himself from the fury of a tyrant, and in that case to deliver him up, is to throw a lamb into the mouth of a lion. 2. If it appeared that the servant was abused, they must not only protect him, but supposing him willing to embrace their religion, they must give him all the encouragement that might be to settle among them. Care is taken both that he should not be imposed upon in the place of his settlement; let it be *that which he shall chuse*, and *where it liketh him best*; and that he should not exchange one hard master for many, *thou shalt not oppress him*. Thus would he soon find a comfortable difference between the land of Israel and other lands, and would chuse it to be his rest for ever. Note, Profelytes and converts to the truth should be treated with particular tenderness, that they may not be in temptation to return.

2. The land of Israel must be no shelter for the unclean; no whore, no Sodomite must be suffered to live among them, ver. 17, 18. neither a whore nor a whoremonger. No houses of uncleanness must be kept either by men or women. Here is, (1.) A good reason intimated why there should be no such wickedness tolerated among them; they were Israelites: That therefore seems to have an emphasis laid upon it. For a daughter of Israel to be a whore, or a son of Israel a whoremaster, is to reproach the stock they are come of, the people they belong to, and the God they worship. It is bad in any, but worst in Israelites, *a holy nation*, 2 Sam. xiii. 12. (2.) A just mark of displeasure put upon this wickedness, That the hire of a whore, i. e. the money she gets by her whoring, and the price of a dog, i. e. of the Sodomite, pimp, or whoremaster, (so I incline to understand it, for such are called dogs, Rev. xxii. 15.) the money he gets by his lewd and villainous practices, no part of it shall be brought into the house of the Lord (as was commonly done by the prostitutes among the Gentiles) for any vow. This intimates, (1.) That God would not accept of any offering at all from such wicked people; they had nothing to bring an offering of but what they got by their wickedness, and therefore their sacrifice could not but be an abomination to the Lord, Prov. xv. 8. (2.) That they should not think by making and paying vows, and bringing offerings to the Lord to obtain leave to go on in this sin, as (it should seem) some that followed that trade suggested to themselves, when their offerings were admitted, Prov. vii. 14, 15. *This day have I paid my vows, therefore came I forth to meet thee*. Nothing should be accepted in commutation of penance. (3.) That we cannot honour God with our substance, unless it be honestly and honour-

ably come by. It must not only be considered what we give, but how we got it; God hates robbery for burnt-offerings, and uncleanness too.

3. The matter of usury is here settled, ver. 19, 20. (1.) They must not lend upon usury to an Israelite. They had and held their estates immediately from and under God, who while he distinguished them from all other people might have ordered, had he so pleased, that they should have all things in common among themselves, but instead of that, and in token of their joint interest in the good land he had given them, he only appointed them, as there was occasion, to lend to one another without interest; which among them would be little or no loss to the lender, because their land was so divided, their estates so settled, and there was so little of merchandize among them, that it was seldom or never that they had occasion to borrow any great sums, but only for the subsistence of their families, when the fruits of their ground had met with any disaster, or the like; and in such a case, for a small matter to insist upon, usury would have been very barbarous. Where the borrower gets, or hopes to get, it is just the lender should share in the gain; but to him that borrows for his necessary food, pity must be shewed, and we must lend hoping for nothing again, if we have wherewithal to do it, Luke vi. 35. (2.) They might lend to a stranger upon usury, who was supposed to live by trade, and (as we say) by turning the penny, and therefore got by what he borrowed, and came among them in hopes to do so. By this it appears that usury is not in itself oppressive; for they must not oppress a stranger, and yet might exact usury from him.

4. The performance of the vows wherewith we have bound our souls is here required, and it is a branch of the law of nature, ver. 21, 22, 23. (1.) We are here left at our liberty whether we will make vows or no. *If thou shalt forbear to vow* (some particular sacrifice and offering, more than was commanded by the law) *it shall be no sin to thee*. God had already signified his readiness to accept a free-will-offering thus vowed, tho' it were but a little *fine flour*, Lev. ii. 4, &c. which was encouragement enough to those who were so inclined. But lest the priests, who had the largest share of those vows and voluntary offerings, should sponge upon the people, by pressing it upon them as their duty to make such vows, beyond their ability and inclination, they are here expressly told it should not be reckoned a sin in them, if they did not make any such vows, as it would be if they omitted any of the sacrifices that God had particularly required. For (as bishop Patrick well expresseth it) God would have men to be easy in his service, and all their offerings to be free and cheerful. (2.) We are here laid under the highest obligations, when we have made a vow, to perform it, and to perform it speedily; thou shalt not slack to pay it, for fear lest if it be delayed, beyond the first opportunity, the zeal abate, the vow be forgotten, or something happen to disable thee for the performance of it. *That which is gone out of thy lips* as a solemn and deliberate vow must not be recalled, but *thou shalt keep and perform it*, punctually and fully. The rule of the gospel goes somewhat further than this, 2 Cor. ix. 7. *Every man according as he purposed in his heart*, tho' it have not gone out of his lips, *so let him give*. Here is a good reason why we should pay our vows, that if we do not, *God will require it of us*, will surely and severely reckon with us, not only for lying, but for going about to mock him, who cannot be mocked. See Eccl. vii. 4, 5.

5. Allowance is here given when they passed thro' a corn-field or a vineyard, to pluck an ear of the corn or grapes that grew by the road side, whether it was done for necessity or delight, only they must carry none away with them, ver. 24, 25. Therefore the disciples were not censured for plucking the ears of corn, it was well enough known, that the law allowed it, but for doing it on the sabbath-day, which the tradition of the elders had forbidden. Now, 1. This law intimated to them what great plenty of corn and wine they should have in Canaan, so much that a little would not be missed out of their fruits: they should have enough for themselves and all their friends. 2. It provided for the support of poor travellers, to relieve the fatigue of their journeys, and teaches us to be kind to such. The Jews say, this care was chiefly intended in favour of labourers, who were employed in gathering in their harvest and vintages, their mouths must not be muzzled no more than that of the ox when he treads out the corn. 3. It teacheth us not to insist upon property in a small matter, of which it is easy to say, *What is that between me and thee?* It was true, the grapes which the passenger eat were none of his own, nor did the proprietor give them him, but the thing was of so small value, that he had reason to think, were he present, he would not deny them him, no more than he himself would grudge the like courtesy, and therefore it was no theft to take them. 4. It used them to hospitality, and teacheth us to be ready to distribute, willing to communicate, and not to think every thing lost that is given away. Yet, lastly, It forbids us to abuse the kindness of our friends, and to take the advantage from fair concessions to make unreasonable encroachments: we must not draw an ell from those that give but an inch; they may eat of their neighbours grapes: but it doth not therefore follow that they may carry away.

CHAP. XXIV.

In this chapter we have, (1.) The toleration of divorce, ver. 1—4. (2.) A discharge of new married men from the war, ver. 5. (3.) Laws concerning pledges, ver. 6, 10—13, and 17. (4.) A-
gainst man-stealing, ver. 7. (5.) Concerning the leprosy, ver. 8, 9. (6.) Against the injustice of masters towards their ser-
vants, ver. 14, 15. Judges in capital causes, ver. 16. and civil
concerns, ver. 17, 18. (7.) Of charity to the poor, ver. 19—22.

1. **W**HEN a man hath taken a wife and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorce-ment, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. 2. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another's man's wife. 3. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorce-ment, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; 4. Her former husband which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled: for that is abomination before the LORD, and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

This is that permission which the Pharisees erroneously referred to as a precept, *Mat. xix. 7. Moses commanded to give a writing of divorcement*; it was not so; our Saviour told them, he only suffered it because of the hardness of their hearts, lest if they had not had liberty to divorce their wives, they should have ruled them with rigor, and, it may be, have been the death of them. It is probable that divorces were in use before, they are taken for granted, *Lev. xxi. 14.* and Moses thought it needful here to give some rules concerning them.

1. That a man might not divorce his wife, unless he found some uncleanness in her, ver. 1. It was not sufficient to say, he did not like her, or that he liked another better, but he must shew cause for his dislike; something that made her disagreeable and unpleasant to him, tho' it might not make her so to another. This uncleanness must mean something less than adultery, for, for that she was to die; and than the suspicion of it, for in that case he might give her the waters of jealousy; but it means either a light carriage, or a cross froward disposition, or some loathsome sore or disease; nay, some of the Jewish writers suppose a stinking breath might be a just ground for divorce. Whatever is meant by it, doubtless, it is something considerable, so that their modern doctors were out, who allowed divorce for every cause, tho' never so trivial, *Mat. xix. 3.*

2. That it must be done not by word of mouth, for that might be spoken hastily, but by writing, and that put in due form, and solemnly declared, before witnesses, to be his own act and deed, which was a work of time, and left room for consideration, that it might not be done rashly.

3. That the husband must give it into the hand of his wife, and send her away; which some think obligeth him to endow her, and make provision for her according to her quality, and such as might help to marry her again; and good reason, since the cause of quarrel was not her fault, but infelicity.

4. That being divorced, it was lawful for her to marry another husband, ver. 2. The divorce had dissolved the bond of marriage as effectually as death could; so that she was free to marry again, as if her first husband had been naturally dead.

5. That if her second husband (died or) divorced her, then still she might marry a third, her first husband should never take her again, (ver. 3, 4.) which he might have done if she had not married another; for by that act of her own, she had perfectly renounced him for ever, and, as to him, was looked upon as defiled, tho' not as to another person. The Jewish writers say, this was to prevent a most vile and wicked practice, which the Egyptians had of changing wives; or perhaps it was intended to prevent mens rashness in putting away their wives; for the wife that was divorced, would be apt in revenge to marry another presently, and perhaps the husband that divorced her, how much soever he thought to mend himself by another choice, would find the next worse, and something in her more disagreeable; so that he would wish for his first wife again: No, (saith this law) you shall not have her, you should have kept her when you had her. Note, It is best to be content with such things as we have, since changes made by discontent, often prove for the worse. The uneasiness we know is commonly better, tho' we are apt to think it worse than that which we do not know. By the strictness of this law, God illustrates the riches of his grace in his willingness to be reconciled to his people that had gone a whoring from him, *Jer. iii. 1. Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again to me, for his thoughts and ways are above ours.*

5. ¶ When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any bu-
No. xiv.

sinews: but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken. 6. ¶ No man shall take the nether or the upper millstone to pledge: for he taketh a man's life to pledge. 7. ¶ If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandise of him, or selleth him; then that thief shall die, and thou shalt put evil away from among you. 8. ¶ Take heed, in the plague of leprosy, that thou observe diligently, and do according to all that the priests the Levites shall teach you: as I commanded them, so ye shall observe to do. 9. Remember what the LORD thy God did unto Miriam by the way, after that ye were come forth out of Egypt. 10. ¶ When thou dost lend thy brother any thing, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge. 11. Thou shalt stand abroad, and the man to whom thou dost lend, shall bring out the pledge abroad unto thee. 12. And if the man be poor, thou shalt not sleep with his pledge. 13. In any case thou shalt deliver him the pledge again when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his own raiment, and bless thee: and it shall be righteousness unto thee before the LORD thy God.

Here is, 1. Provision made for the preservation and confirmation of love between new married people, ver. 5. This fitly follows upon the laws concerning divorce, which would be prevented if their affection to each other were well settled at first. If the husband were much abroad from his wife the first year, his love to her would be in danger of cooling, and of being drawn aside to others he would meet with abroad; therefore his service to his country in war, embassies, or other publick business that would call him from home, shall be dispensed with, *that he may cheer up the wife which he has taken.* Note, (1.) It is of great consequence that love be kept up between husband and wife, and that every thing be very carefully avoided which might make them strange one to another, especially at first; for in that relation, where there is not the love that should be, there is an inlet ready to abundance of guilt and grief. (2.) One of the duties of that relation is to cheer up one another, under the cares and crosses that happen, as helpers of each other's joy; for a cheerful heart doth good like a medicine.

2. A law against man-stealing, ver. 7. It was not death by the law of Moses to steal cattle or goods, but to steal a child, or a weak and simple man, or one that a man had in his power, and to make merchandise of him, this was a capital crime, and could not be expiated, as other thefts, by restitution; so much is a man better than a sheep, *Mat. xii. 12.* It was a very heinous offence, for (1.) It was robbing the publick of one of its members. (2.) It was taking away a man's liberty, the liberty of a free-born Israelite, which was next in value to his life. (3.) It was driving a man out from the inheritance of the land, to the privileges of which he was intitled, and bidding him go serve other gods, as David complains against Saul, *1 Sam. xxvi. 19.*

3. A memorandum concerning the leprosy, ver. 8, 9. (1.) The laws concerning it must be carefully observed. The laws concerning it we had, *Lev. xiii. and xiv.* they are here said to be commanded to the priests and Levites, and therefore are not repeated in a discourse to the people; but the people are here charged in case of leprosy, to apply themselves to the priest according to the law, and to abide by his judgment, so far as it agreed with the law, and the plain matter of fact. The plague of leprosy being usually a particular mark of God's displeasure for sin; he in whom the signs of it did appear, ought not to conceal it, or cut out the signs of it, or apply himself to the physician for relief; but he must go to the priest, and follow his directions. Thus they that feel their consciences under guilt and wrath, must not cover it, or endeavour to shake off their convictions, but by repentance and prayer, and humble confession, take the appointed way to peace and pardon. (2.) The particular case of Miriam, who was smitten with leprosy for quarrelling with Moses, must not be forgotten: It was an explication of the law concerning the leprosy. Remember that, and, 1. Take heed of sinning after the similitude of her transgression, by despising dominions, and speaking evil of dignities, lest you thereby bring upon your selves the same judgment. 2. If any of you be smitten with a leprosy, expect not that the law should be dispensed with, nor think it hard to be shut out of the camp, and so made a spectacle; there is no remedy; Miriam herself, tho' a prophetess, and the sister of Moses, was not exempted, but was forced to submit to this severe discipline, when she was under this divine rebuke. Thus since David, Hezekiah, Peter, and other great men, when they had sinned, humbled themselves, and took to themselves shame and grief, let not us expect to be reconciled upon easier terms.

4. Some necessary orders given about pledges or pawns, for the securing of money lent. They are not forbidden to take such securities which would save the lender from loss, and oblige the borrower to be honest; but (1.) They must not take the millstone for a pledge, ver. 6. for with that they ground the corn that was

to be bread for their families; or if it were a publick mill, with it the miller got his livelihood; and so it forbids the taking of any thing for a pledge, by the want of which a man was in danger of being undone. Consonant to this is the ancient common law of England, which provides, That no man be distrained by the utensils or instruments of his trade or profession, as the ax of a carpenter, or the books of a scholar, nor beasts belonging to the plow, as long as there are other beasts, of which distress may be made. (*Coke 1. Inst. fol. 47.*) This teaches us to consult the comfort and subsistence of others as much as our own advantage. That creditor who cares not tho' his debtor and his family starve, nor is at all concerned what becomes of them, so he may but get his money or secure it; goes contrary not only to the law of Christ, but even to the law of Moses too. (2.) They must not go into the borrowers houses to fetch the pledge, but must stand without, and he must bring it, *ver. 10, 11.* *The borrower* (saith Solomon) *is servant to the lender*, therefore lest the lender should abuse the advantage he has against him, and make a hand of it for himself, it is provided, that he take not what he pleases, but what the borrower can best spare. A man's house is his castle, even the poor man's house is so, and is here taken under the protection of the law. (3.) That a poor man's bed-clothes should never be taken for a pledge, *ver. 12, 13.* This we had before, *Exod. xxii. 26, 27.* If they were taken in the morning, they must be brought back again at night, which is in effect to say, they must not be taken at all. Let the poor debtor sleep in his own raiment, and bless thee, *i. e.* pray for thee, and praise God for thy kindness to him. Note, Poor debtors ought to be sensible (more sensible than commonly they are) of the goodness of those creditors that do not take all the advantage of the law against them, and to repay their kindnesses by their prayers for them, when they are not in a capacity of repaying it any other way. Nay, thou shalt not only have the prayers and good wishes of thy poor brother, but *it shall be righteousness to thee before the Lord thy God*, *i. e.* it shall be accepted and rewarded as an act of mercy to thy brother, and obedience to thy God, and an evidence of thy sincere conformity to the law. Tho' it may be looked upon, by men, as an act of weakness, to deliver up the securities thou hast for thy debt, yet it shall be looked upon by thy God as an act of goodness, which shall in no wise lose its reward.

14. ¶ Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, *whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates.* 15. At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it, for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it; lest he cry against thee unto the LORD, and it be sin unto thee. 16. The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin. 17. ¶ Thou shalt not pervert the judgment of the stranger, nor of the fatherless, nor take a widows raiment to pledge. 18. But thou shalt remember that thou wast a bond-man in Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee thence: therefore I command thee to do this thing. 19. ¶ When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands. 20. When thou beatest thine olive-tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. 21. When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. 22. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bond-man in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

Here, 1. Masters are commanded to be just to their poor servants, *ver. 14, 15.* (1.) They must not oppress them, either by overloading them with work, giving them undue and unreasonable rebukes, or with-holding from them fitting maintenance. A servant, tho' a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel, must not be abused, for *thou wast a bond-man in the land where thou wast a stranger*, *ver. 18.* and thou knowest what a grievous thing it is to be oppressed by a task-master, and therefore in tenderness to those that are servants and strangers, and in gratitude to that God who set thee at liberty, and settled thee in a country of thy own, *Thou shalt not oppress a servant.* Let not masters be tyrants to their servants, for *their master is in heaven.* See *Job xxxi. 13.* (2.) They must be faithful and punctual in paying them their wages. *At his day thou shalt give him his hire*, not only pay it him in full, without fraud, but pay it in time without further delay. As soon as he has done his day's work, if he desire it, let him have his day's wages, as those labourers, *Mat. xx. 8.* *When even was come.* He that works by day-wages is supposed to live from hand to mouth, and cannot have to-morrow's bread for his

family, till he is paid for this day's labour. If the wages be withheld, 1. It will be grief to the servant, for, poor man, he sets his heart upon it, or, as the word is, he lifts up his soul to it, he is earnestly desirous of it, as the reward of his work, *Job vii. 2.* and depends upon it as the gift of God's providence for the maintenance of his family. A compassionate master tho' it should be somewhat inconvenient to himself, would not balk the expectation of a poor servant that is so fond to think of receiving his wages. But that is not the worst. 2. It will be guilt to the master. The injured servant will cry against thee to the Lord; since he has no one else to appeal to, he will lodge his appeal in the court of heaven, and it will be sin to thee. Or if he do not complain, the cause will speak for itself, the hire of the labourers which is kept back by fraud will itself cry, *Jam. v. 4.* It is a greater sin than most people think it is, and will be found so in the great day to put hardships upon poor servants, labourers, and workmen that we employ. God will do them right if men do not.

2. Magistrates and judges are commanded to be just in their administrations, 1. In those which we call *Pleas of the Crown*, a standing rule is here given, That the fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children for the fathers, *ver. 16.* If the children make themselves obnoxious to the law, let them suffer for it, but let not the parents suffer either for them, or with them; it is grief enough to them to see their children suffer: If the parents be guilty let them die for their own sin; but tho' God, the sovereign Lord of life, sometimes visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, especially the sin of idolatry, and when he deals with nations in their national capacity, yet he doth not allow men to do so. Accordingly we find Amaziah sparing the children, even then when the fathers were put to death for killing the king, *2 Kings xiv. 6.* It was in an extraordinary case, and no doubt by special direction from heaven, that Saul's sons were put to death for his offence, and they died rather as sacrifices than as malefactors, *2 Sam. xxi. 9, 14.* 2. In common pleas between party and party, great care must be taken that none whose cause was just should fare the worse for their weakness, nor for their being destitute of friends, as strangers, fatherless, and widows, *ver. 17.* *Thou shalt not pervert their judgment*, nor force them to give their very raiment for a pledge, by defrauding them of their right. Judges must be advocates for those that cannot speak for themselves, and have no friends to speak for them.

3. The rich are commanded to be kind and charitable to the poor. Many ways they are ordered to be so, by the law of Moses. The particular instance of charity here prescribed, is, that they should not be greedy in gathering in their corn, and grapes, and olives, so as to be afraid of leaving any behind them, but be willing to over-look some, and let the poor have the gleanings, *ver. 19, 20, 21, 22.* (1.) Say not, it is all my own, and why should not I have it? But learn a generous contempt of property in small matters. One sheaf or two forgotten, will make thee never the poorer at the year's end, and it will do somebody good, if thou have it not. (2.) Say not, *what I give I will give*, and know who I give it to, why should I leave it to be gathered by I know not who, that will never thank me? But trust God's providence with the disposal of thy charity, perhaps that will direct it to the most necessitous. Or, Thou mayest reasonably think it will come to the hands of the most industrious, that are forward to seek and gather that which this law provides for them. (3.) Say not, what should the poor do with grapes and olives? It is enough for them to have bread and water; for since they have the same senses that the rich have, why should not they have some little share of the delights of sense? Boaz ordered handfals of corn to be left on purpose for Ruth, and God blessed him. All that is left is not lost.

C H A P. XXV.

Here is, 1. A law to moderate the scourging of malefactors, *ver. 1—3.* 2. A law in favour of the ox that treads out the corn, *ver. 4.* 3. For the disgracing of him that refused to marry his brother's widow, *ver. 5—10.* 4. For the punishment of an immodest woman, *ver. 11, 12.* 5. For just weights and measures, *ver. 13—16.* 6. For the destroying of Amalek, *ver. 17—19.*

1. ¶ If there be a controversie between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them, then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked. 2. And it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number. 3. Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed: lest if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee. 4. ¶ Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.

Here is, 1. A direction to the judges in scourging malefactors, *ver. 1, 2, 3.* (1.) It is here supposed, that if a man be charged with

with a crime, the accuser and the accused (*Actor* and *Reus*) should be brought face to face before the judges, that the controversy may be determined. (2.) If a man were accused of a crime, and the proof fell short, so that the charge could not be made out against him by the evidence; then he was to be acquitted, thou shalt justify the righteous, i. e. him that appears to the court to be so. If the accusation be proved, then the conviction of the accused is a justification of the accuser, as righteous in the prosecution. (3.) If the accused were found guilty, judgment must be given against him, thou shalt condemn the wicked; for to justify the wicked is as much an abomination to the Lord, as it is to condemn the righteous, Prov. xvii. 15. (4.) If the crime were not made capital by the law, then the criminal must be beaten. A great many precepts we have met with, which have not any particular penalty annexed to them, the violation of most of which the constant practice of the Jews was to punish by scourging, from which no person's rank or quality did exempt him, if he were a delinquent, but with this proviso, that he should never be upbraided with it, nor should it be looked upon as leaving any mark of infamy or disgrace upon him. The directions here given for the scourging of criminals are, 1. That it be done solemnly; not tumultuously through the streets, but in open court before the judge's face, and with so much deliberation as that the stripes might be numbered. The Jews say, while execution was in doing, the chief justice of the court read with a loud voice, Deut. xxviii. 58, 59. and Deut. xxix. 9. and concluded with those words, *Psal.* lxxviii. 38. *But he being full of compassion forgave their iniquity.* Thus it was made a sort of a religious act, and so much the more likely to reform the offender himself, and to be a warning to others. 2. That it be done in proportion to the crime, according to his fault, that some crimes might appear as they are more heinous than others, the criminal being beaten with many stripes, to which perhaps there is an allusion, Luke xii. 47, 48. 3. That how great soever the crime were the number of stripes would never exceed forty, ver. 3. Forty save one was the common usage, as appears, 2 Cor. xi. 24. It seems they always gave Paul as many stripes as ever they gave to any malefactor whatsoever. They abated one, either for fear of having miscounted, (tho' one of the judges was appointed to number the stripes) or, because they would never go to the utmost rigour, or, because the execution was usually done with a whip of three lashes, so that thirteen stripes, (each one being counted for three) made up thirty-nine, but one more by that reckoning would have been forty-two. The reason given for this is, *lest thy brother should seem vile unto thee.* He must still be looked upon as a brother, (2 Thes. iii. 15.) and his reputation as such was preserved, by this merciful limitation of his punishment. It saves him from seeming vile to his brethren, when God himself by his law takes this care of him: Men must not be treated as dogs; nor must those seem vile in our sight, to whom, for ought we know, God may yet give grace to make them precious in his sight.

2. A charge to husbandmen not to hinder their cattle from eating when they were working, if meat were within their reach, ver. 4. This instance of the beast that trod out the corn (to which there is an allusion in that of the prophet, *Hof.* x. 11.) is put for other the like. That which makes this law very remarkable above its fellows (and which countenances the like application of other such laws) is that it is twice quoted in the New Testament, to shew, that it is the duty of the people to give their ministers a comfortable maintenance, 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10. and 1 Tim. v. 17, 18. It teacheth us in the letter of it to make much of the brute creatures that serve us, and to allow them not only the necessary supports of this life, but the advantages of their labour; and thus we must learn not only to be just, but kind to all that are employed for our good, not only to maintain but to encourage them, especially those that labour among us in the word and doctrine, and so are employed for the good of our better part.

5. ¶ If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her. 6. And it shall be, that the first-born which she beareth, shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel. 7. And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother. 8. Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and if he stand to it, and say, I like not to take her: 9. Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house. 10. And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed. 11. ¶

When men strive together one with another, and the wife of the one draweth near for to deliver her husband out of the hand of him that smiteth him, and putteth forth her hand, and taketh him by the secrets. 12. Then thou shalt cut off her hand, thine eye shall not pity her.

Here is, 1. The law settled concerning the marrying of a brother's widow. It appears by the story of Judah's family that this had been an antient usage, *Gen.* xxxviii. 8. for the keeping up of distinct families. The case put is a case that often happens, of a man's dying without issue, it may be in the prime of his time, soon after his marriage, and while his brethren, were yet so young as to be unmarried. Now in this case, (1.) The widow was not to marry again into any other family, unless all the relations of her husband did refuse her, that the estate she was endowed with might not be alienated. (2.) The husband's brother, or next of kin, must marry her, partly with respect to her, who having forgotten her own people and her father's house, should have all possible kindness shewed her by the family into which she was married; and partly with respect to the deceased husband, that tho' he was dead and gone, he might not be forgotten, nor lost out of the genealogies of his tribes; for the first-born child which the brother, or next kinsman, should have by the widow, should be denominated from him that was dead, and entered in the genealogy as his child, ver. 5, 6. Under that dispensation we have reason to think men had not so clear and certain a prospect of living themselves on the other side death, as we have now, to whom life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel, and therefore they could not but be the more desirous to live in their posterity, which innocent desire was in some measure gratified by this law, an expedient being found out, that tho' a man had no child by his wife, yet his name should not be put out of Israel, i. e. out of the pedigree, or, which was equivalent, remain there under the brand of childlessness. The Sadducees put a case to our Saviour upon this law, with a design to perplex the doctrine of the resurrection by it, *Mat.* xxii. 24, &c. perhaps insinuating, that there was no need of maintaining the immortality of the soul, and a future state, since the law had so well provided for the perpetuating of mens names and families in the world. But, (3.) If the brother, or next of kin, declined to do this good office to the memory of him that was gone, what must be done in that case? Why, 1. He shall be compelled to do it, ver. 7. If he like her not, he is at his liberty to refuse her, which some think was not permitted in this case before this law of Moses. Affection is all in all to the comfort of that relation; that is a thing which cannot be forced, and therefore the relation should not be forced without it. 2. Yet he shall be publicly disgraced for not doing it. The widow, as the person most concerned for the name and honour of the deceased, was to complain to the elders of his refusal; if he persist in it, she was to pluck off his shoe, and spit in his face, in open court, (or as the Jewish doctors moderate it, spit before his face) thus to fasten a mark of infamy upon him, which was to stick to his family after him, ver. 8, 9, 10. Note, Those justly suffer in their own reputation, who do not do what they ought to preserve the name and honour of others. He that would not build up his brother's house, deserved to have this blemish put upon his own, that it should be called, *the house of him that had his shoe loosed*, in token, that he deserved to go barefoot. In the case of Ruth, we find this law executed, *Ruth* iv. 7. only because upon the refusal of the next kinsman, there was another ready to perform the duty of an husband's brother, it was that other that plucked off the shoe, and not the widow; Boaz, and not Ruth.

2. A law for the punishing of an immodest woman, ver. 11, 12. The woman that by the foregoing law was to complain against her husband's brother for not marrying her, and to spit in his face before the elders, had need of a very good assurance, but lest the confidence which that law supported, should grow to an excess unbecoming the sex, here is a very severe but just law to punish impudence and immodesty. (1.) The instance of it is confessedly scandalous to the highest degree. A woman could not do it, unless she were perfectly lost to all virtue and honour. (2.) The occasion is such, as might in part excuse it; it was to help her husband out of the hands of one that was too hard for him. Now if the doing of it in a passion, and with such a good intention, was to be so severely punished, much more when it were done wantonly, and in lust. (3.) The punishment was, that her hand was to be cut off; and the magistrates must not pretend to be more merciful than God, *thine eye shall not pity her.* Perhaps our Saviour alludes to this law, when he commands us to cut off the right hand that offends us, or is an occasion of sin to us, better put the greatest hardships that can be upon the body than ruin the soul for ever. Modesty is the hedge of chastity, and therefore ought to be very carefully preserved and kept up by both sexes.

13. ¶ Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small. 14. Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small. 15. But thou

thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have: that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. 16. For all that do such things, *and* all that do unrighteously, *are* an abomination unto the LORD thy God. 17. ¶ Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way when ye were come forth out of Egypt: 18. How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, *even* all *that were* feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God. 19. Therefore it shall be, when the LORD thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, *for* an inheritance to possess it, *that* thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it.

Here is, 1. A law against deceitful weights and measures: they must not only not use them, but they must not have them; not have them in the bag, not have them in the house, *ver.* 13, 14. for if they had them, they would be strongly tempted to use them. They must not have a great weight and measure to buy by, and a small one to sell by, for that was to cheat both ways, when either was bad enough; as we read of those that made the ephah small, in which they measured the corn they sold, and the shekel great, by which they weighed the money they received for it, *Amos vii. 5.* But *thou shalt have a perfect and just weight*, *ver.* 15. That which is the rule of justice must it self be just, if that be otherwise, it is a constant cheat. This had been taken care of before, *Lev. xix. 35, 36.* This law is enforced with two very good reasons. (1.) That justice and equity will bring down upon us the blessing of God. The way to have our days lengthened, and to prosper, is to be just and fair in all our dealings; *honesty is the best policy.* (2.) That fraud and injustice will expose us to the curse of God, *ver.* 16. Not only unrighteousness it self, but all that do unrighteously are an *abomination to the Lord.* And miserable is that man that is abhorred by his maker. How hateful, particularly, all the arts of deceit are to God, Solomon several times observes, *Prov. xi. 1.—xx. 10, 23.* and the apostle tells us, *that the Lord is the avenger of all such as over-reach and defraud in any matter*, *1 Thes. iv. 6.*

2. A Law for the rooting out of Amalek. Here is a *just weight*, and a *just measure*; that as Amalek had measured to Israel, so it should be measured to Amalek again. (1.) The mischief Amalek did to Israel must be here remembered, *ver.* 17, 18. When it was first done it was ordered to be recorded, *Exod. xvii. 14, 15, 16.* and here the remembrance of it to be preserved, not in personal revenge, for that generation which suffered by the Amalekites was gone, so that these which now lived, and their posterity, could not have any personal resentment of the injury, but in a zeal for the glory of God, which was insulted by the Amalekites, that *throne of the Lord* against which the hand of Amalek was stretched out. The carriage of the Amalekites towards Israel is here represented, (1.) As very base and desingenuous. They had no occasion at all to quarrel with Israel, nor did they give them any notice, by a manifesto, or declaration of war; but took them at an advantage, when they were newly come out of the house of bondage, and, for ought appeared to them, were only going to *sacrifice to God in the wilderness.* (2.) As very barbarous and cruel, for they smote them that were feeble, whom they should have succoured. The greatest cowards are commonly the most cruel, while those that have the courage of a man, will have the compassions of a man. (3.) As very impious and profane, they feared not God. If they had any reverence for the majesty of the God of Israel, which they saw a token of in the cloud, or any dread of his wrath, which they lately heard of the power of over Pharaoh, they durst not have made this assault upon Israel. Well, here was the ground of the quarrel: and it shews how God takes what is done against his people, as done against himself; and that he will particularly reckon with those that discourage and hinder young beginners in religion, that (as Satan's agents) set upon the weak and feeble, either to divert them, or to disquiet them, and offend his little ones.

(2.) This mischief must in due time be revenged, *ver.* 19. When their wars were finished, by which they were to settle their kingdom, and enlarge their coast, then they must *make war upon Amalek*, *ver.* 14. not merely to chase them, but to consume them, to *blot out the remembrance of Amalek.* It was an instance of God's patience, that he deferred the vengeance so long, which should have led the Amalekites to repentance; yet an instance of the depth of the resentments, that the posterity of Amalek so long after were destroyed for the mischief done by their ancestors, to the Israel of God. That all the world may see, and say, that he who *toucheth them, toucheth the apple of his eye.* It was near four hundred years after this, that Saul was ordered to put this sentence in execution, *1 Sam. xv.* and was rejected of God, because he did not do it effectually, but spared some of that devoted nation, in contempt not only of the particular orders he received from Samuel, but of this general command here given by Moses, which he could not be ignorant of. David afterwards made some destruction of

them, and the Simeonites, in Hezekiah's time, smote the *rest that remained*, *1 Chron. iv. 43.* for when God judgeth, he will overcome.

C H A P. XXVI.

With this chapter Moses concludes the particular statutes, which he thought fit to give Israel in charge at his parting with them: what follows is by way of sanction, and ratification. In this chapter, 1. Moses gives them a form of confession to be made by him that offered the basket of his first-fruits, ver. 1—11. 2. The protestation and prayer to be made after the disposal of the third year's tithe, ver. 12—15. 3. He binds on all the precepts he had given them. (1.) By the divine authority; not 1, but the Lord thy God has commanded thee to do these statutes, ver. 16. (2.) By the mutual covenant between God and them, ver. 17—19.

1. **A**ND it shall be when thou art come in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein: 2. That thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose, to place his name there. 3. And thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days, and say unto him, I profess this day unto the LORD thy God, that I am come unto the country which the LORD swore unto our fathers for to give us. 4. And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand, and set it down before the altar of the LORD thy God. 5. And thou shalt speak and say before the LORD thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation great, mighty, and populous. 6. And the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage. 7. And when we cried unto the LORD God of our fathers, the LORD heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression. 8. And the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders. 9. And he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, *even* a land that floweth with milk and hony. 10. And now behold, I have brought the first fruits of the land, which thou, O LORD, hast given me: and thou shalt set it before the LORD thy God, and worship before the LORD thy God. 11. And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the LORD thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you.

Here is, 1. A good work ordered to be done, and that is, the presenting of a basket of their first-fruit to God every year, *ver.* 1, 2. Besides the *sheaf of first-fruits*, which was offered for the whole land, on the morrow after the passover, *Lev. xxiii. 10.* Every man was to bring for himself a basket of first-fruits, at the feast of pentecost, when the harvest was ended, which is therefore called the *feast of first-fruits*, *Exod. xxxiv. 22.* and is said to be kept with a *tribute of free-will-offering*, *Deut. xvi. 10.* But the Jews say, the first-fruits, if not brought then, might be brought any time after between that and winter. When a man went into the field or vineyard at the time when the fruits were ripening, he was to mark that which he observed most forward, and to lay it by for first-fruits, wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates, some of each sort must be put in the same basket, with leaves between them, and presented to God in the place which he should chuse. Now from this law we may learn, (1.) To acknowledge God as the giver of all those good things which are the support and comfort of our natural life, and therefore to serve and honour him with them. (2.) To deny our selves. What is first ripe we are most fond of; those that are nice and curious expect to be served with each fruit at its first coming in, *my soul desired the first ripe fruits*, *Mic. vii. 1.* When therefore God appointed them to lay those by for him, he taught them to prefer the glorifying of his name, before the gratifying of their own appetites and desires. (3.) To give to God the first and best we have, as those that believe him to be the first and best of beings. They that consecrate the days of their youth, and the prime of their time, to the service and honour of God, bring him their first-fruits, and with such offerings he is well pleased, *I remember the kindness of thy youth.*

2. Good words put into their mouths to be said in the doing of this good work, as an explication of the meaning of this ceremony, that it might be a reasonable service. The officer must begin

begin his acknowledgment before he delivered his basket to the priest, and then must go on with it, when the priest had set down the basket before the altar, as a present to God their great landlord, *ver. 3, 4.*

1. He must begin with a receipt in full for the good land which God had given them, *ver. 3. I profess that I am come now at last after forty years wandering, unto the country which the Lord sware to give us.* This was most proper to be said when they came first into Canaan; probably when they had been long settled there, they varied from this form. Note, When God has made good his promises to us, he expects we should own it, to the honour of his faithfulness; this is like giving up the bond, as Solomon doth, *1 Kings viii. 56. There has not failed one word of all his good promise.* And our creature-comforts are then doubly sweet to us, when we see them flowing to us from the fountain of the promise.

2. He must remember, and own the mean original of that nation, which he was a member of; how great soever they were now, and he himself with them, their beginning was very small, which ought thus to be kept in mind throughout all the ages of their church by this publick confession, that they might not be proud of their privileges and advantages, but might, for ever, be thankful to that God whose grace chose them when they were so low, and raised them so high. Two things they must own for this purpose, (1.) The meanness of their common ancestor. *A Syrian ready to perish was my father, ver. 5.* Jacob is here called an Aramite, or Syrian, because he lived twenty years in Padan-Aram; his wives were of that country, and his children were all born there, except Benjamin; and perhaps the confessor means not Jacob himself, but that son of Jacob, who was the father of his tribe. However it be, both father and sons were more than once ready to perish, by Laban's severity, Esau's cruelty, and the famine in the land; which last was the occasion of their going down into Egypt. *Laban the Syrian sought to destroy my father, so the Chaldee; had almost destroyed him, so the Arabick.* (2.) The miserable condition of their nation in its infancy. They sojourned in Egypt as strangers, they served there as slaves, *ver. 6.* and that a great while: as their father was called a Syrian, they might be called Egyptians; so that their possession of Canaan being so long discontinued, they could not pretend any tenant-right to it. A poor, despised, oppressed people they were in Egypt, and therefore, tho' now rich and great, had no reason to be proud or secure, or forgetful of God.

3. He must thankfully acknowledge God's great goodness, not only to himself in particular, but to Israel in general. (1.) In bringing them out of Egypt, *ver. 7, 8.* It is spoken of here as an act of pity, he looked on our affliction, and an act of power, he brought us forth with a mighty hand. This was a great salvation fit to be remembered upon all occasions, and particularly upon this; they need not grudge to bring a basket of first-fruits to God, for to him they owed it, that they were not now bringing in the tale of bricks to their cruel task-masters. (2.) In settling them in Canaan, *ver. 9. He hath given us this land.* Observe, He must not only give thanks for his own lot, but for the land in general, which was given to Israel; not only for this year's profits, but for the ground it self, which produced them, which God had graciously granted to his ancestors, and entailed upon his posterity. Note, The comfort we have in our particular enjoyments, should lead us to be thankful for our share in publick peace and plenty; and with present mercies we should bless God for the former mercies we remember, and the further mercies we expect and hope for.

4. He must offer to God his basket of first-fruits, *ver. 10. I have brought the first-fruits of the land, (like a pepper-corn) as a quit-rent for the land which thou hast given me.* Note, Whatever we give to God, it is but of his own that we give him, *1 Chron. xxix. 14.* And it becomes us, who receive so much from him, to study what we shall render to him. The basket he set before God, and the priests, as God's receivers, had the first-fruits, as perquisites of their place, and fees for attending, *Numb. xviii. 12.*

Lastly, The offerer is here appointed, when he has finished the service, (1.) To give glory to God, *thou shalt worship the Lord thy God.* His first-fruits were not accepted without further acts of adoration. A humble, reverent, thankful heart, is that which God looks at and requires, and without that, all we can put in a basket will not avail. *If a man would give all the substance of his house to be excused from this, or in lieu of it, it would utterly be condemned.* (2.) To take the comfort of it to himself and his family, *ver. 11. Thou shalt rejoice in every good thing.* It is the will of God that we should not only be cheerful in our attendance upon his holy ordinances, but that we should be cheerful in our enjoyments of the gift of his providence. Whatever good thing God gives us, it is his will that we should make the most comfortable use we can of it, yet still tracing the streams to the fountain of all comfort and consolation.

12. ¶ When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase, the third year, *which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stran-*
No. xiv.

ger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled: 13. Then thou shalt say before the LORD thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them. 14. I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away ought thereof for any unclean use, nor given ought thereof for the dead: but I have hearkened to the voice of the LORD my God, and have done according to all that thou hast commanded me. 15. Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and hony.

Concerning the disposal of their tithe, the third year, we had the law before, *chap. xiv. 28, 29.* That second tithe which the other two years was to be spent in extraordinaries at the feasts, was to be spent the third year at home in entertaining the poor. Now, because this was done from under the eye of the priests, and a great confidence was put in the peoples honesty, that they would dispose of it according to the law, to the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, *ver. 12.* it is therefore required, that when at the next feast after, they appeared before the Lord, they should there testify (as it were) upon oath, in a religious manner, that they had fully administered, and been true to their trust.

1. They must make a solemn protestation to that purpose; *ver. 13, 14. (1.) That no hallowed things were hoarded up, I have brought them away out of mine house, nothing now remains there but my own part. (2.) That the poor, and particularly poor ministers, poor strangers and poor widows, had had their part according to the commandment. It is fit God, who by his providence gives us all we have, should, by his law, direct the using of it, and tho' we are not now under such particular appropriations of our revenue as they then were, yet in general we are commanded to give alms of such things as we have; and then, and not otherwise, all things are clean to us. Then we may take the comfort of our enjoyments, when God has thus had his dues out of them. This is a commandment which must not be transgressed, no not with an excuse of its being forgotten, ver. 13. (3.) That none of this tithe had been misapplied to any common use, much less to any ill use. This seems to refer to the tithe of the other two years, which was to be eaten by the owners themselves; they must profess, (1.) That they had not eaten of it in their mourning, when by their mourning for the dead they were commonly unclean; or, they had not eaten of it grudgingly as those that all their days eat in darkness. (2.) That they had not sacrilegiously alienated it to any common use, for it was not their own. And lastly, That they had not given it for the dead, for the honour of their dead gods, or in hope of making it beneficial to their dead friends. Now the obliging of them to make this solemn protestation at the three years end, would be an obligation upon them to deal faithfully, knowing that they must be called upon thus to purge themselves. It is our wisdom to keep conscience clear at all times, that when we come to give up our account, we may lift up our face without spot. The Jews say, that this protestation of their integrity was to be made with a low voice, because it looked like a self-commendation; but that the foregoing confession of God's goodness was to be made with a loud voice to his glory. He that durst not make this protestation, must bring his trespass-offering, Lev. v. 15.*

2. To this solemn protestation they must add a solemn prayer, *ver. 15.* not particularly for themselves, but for God's people Israel, for in the common peace and prosperity every particular person prospereth and has peace. We must learn from hence to be publick spirited in prayer, and to wrestle with God for blessings for the land and nation, our English Israel, and for the universal church, which we are directed to have an eye to in our prayers, as the Israel of God, *Gal. vi. 16.* In this prayer we are taught, 1. To look up to God as in a holy habitation, and from thence to infer that holiness becomes his house, and that he will be sanctified in those that are about him. 2. To depend upon the favour of God, and his gracious cognizance, as sufficient to make us and our people happy. 3. To reckon it wonderful condescension in God to cast an eye, even upon so great and honourable a body as Israel was. It is looking down. 4. To be earnest with God for a blessing upon his people Israel, and upon the land which he has given us. For how should the earth yield its increase? or if it do, what comfort can we take in it, unless there-with God, even our own God, give us his blessing? *Psal. lxxvii. 6.*

16. ¶ This day the LORD thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments: thou shalt therefore

therefore keep and do them with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. 17. Thou hast avouched the LORD this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice. 18. And the LORD hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldst keep all his commandments: 19. And to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour, and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the LORD thy God, as he hath spoken.

Two things Moses here urges to enforce all these precepts.

1. That they were the *commands of God*, ver. 16. They were not the dictates of his own wisdom, nor were they enacted by any authority of his own, but infinite wisdom framed them, and the power of the King of kings made them binding to them. *The Lord thy God commands thee*, therefore thou art bound in duty and gratitude to obey him, and it is at thy peril if thou disobey. They are his laws, therefore thou shalt do them, for to that end were they given thee: do them and not dispute them, do them and not draw back from them; do them not carelessly and hypocritically, but with thy *heart and soul*, thy *whole heart* and thy *whole soul*.

2. That their covenant with God, obliged them to keep these commands. He insists not only upon God's sovereignty over them, but his propriety in them, and the relation wherein they stood to him. The covenant is mutual, and it binds to obedience both ways.

1. That we may perform our part of the covenant, and answer the intentions of that, ver. 17. *Thou hast avouched and solemnly owned and confessed the Lord Jehovah, to be thy God, thy prince and ruler.* As he is so by an incontestible right, so he is by thine own consent. They did this implicitly by their attendance on his word, had done it expressly, *Exod. xxiv.* and were now to do it again before they parted, *Deut. xxiv. 1.* Now this obligeth us in fidelity to our word, as well as in duty to our sovereign, to *keep his statutes and his commandments.* We really forswear our selves, and perfidiously violate the most sacred engagements, if when we have taken the Lord to be our God, we do not make conscience of obeying his commands.

2. That God's part of the covenant also may be made good, and the intentions of that answered, ver. 18, 19. *The Lord has avouched, not only taken, but publickly owned thee to be his Segullah, his peculiar people, as he has promised thee, i. e.* according to the true intent and meaning of the promise. Now their obedience was not only the condition of this favour, and of the continuance of it; if they were not obedient, God would disown them, and cast them off: but it was also the principal design of this favour. He has avouched thee on purpose, *that thou shouldst keep his commandments*, that thou mightest have both the best directions and the best encouragements in religion. Thus we are *elect to obedience*, 1 Pet. i. 2. *chosen that we should be holy*, Eph. i. 4. purified a peculiar people, that we might not only do good works but be zealous in them, *Tit. ii. 14.*

Two things God is here said to design in avouching them to be his peculiar people, ver. 19. To make them high, and in order to that, to make them holy; for holiness is true honour, and the only way to everlasting honour. (1.) To make them high above all nations. The greatest honour we are capable of in this world is to be taken into covenant with God, and to live in his service. *High in praise*; for God would accept them, that is true praise, *Rom. ii. 29.* Their friends would admire them, *Psal. xlviii. 2.* Their enemies would envy them, *Zeph. iii. 19, 20.* *High in name*, which some think speaks the continuance and perpetuity of that praise, *a name that shall not be cut off.* And *high in honour*, i. e. in all the advantages of wealth and power, which would make them great among their neighbours. See *Jer. xiii. 11.* (2.) That they might be a holy people, separated for God, devoted for him, and employed continually in his service. This God aimed at in taking them to be his people; so that if they did not keep his commandments, they received all this grace in vain.

CHAP. XXVII.

Moses having very largely and fully set before the people their duty, both to God and one another, in general, and in particular instances; having shewed them plainly what is good, and what the Lord requires of them; and having in the close of the foregoing chapter laid them under the obligation both of the command and the covenant, he comes in this chapter to prescribe outward means. 1. For the helping of their memories, that they might not forget the law as a strange thing. They must write all the words of this law upon stones, ver. 1—10. 2. For the moving of their affections, that they might not be indifferent to the law as a light thing. When they were come into Canaan, the blessings and curses which were the sanctions of the law, were to be solemnly pronounced in the hearing of all Israel, who

were to say Amen to them, ver. 11—26. And if such a solemnity as this would not make a deep impression upon them, and affect them with the great things of God's law, nothing would.

1. **A**ND Moses with the elders of Israel, commanded the people, saying, Keep all the commandments which I command you this day. 2. And it shall be on the day when you shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee; that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaister them with plaister. 3. And thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art passed over, that thou mayest go in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, a land that floweth with milk and hony: as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee. 4. Therefore it shall be when ye be gone over Jordan, that ye shall set up these stones, which I command you this day, in mount Ebal, and thou shalt plaister them with plaister. 5. And there shalt thou build an altar unto the LORD thy God, an altar of stones: thou shalt not lift up any iron tool upon them. 6. Thou shalt build the altar of the LORD thy God of whole stones: and thou shalt offer burnt-offerings thereon unto the LORD thy God. 7. And thou shalt offer peace-offerings, and shalt eat there, and rejoyce before the LORD thy God. 8. And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly. 9. ¶ And Moses, and the priests the Levites, spake unto all Israel, saying, Take heed, and hearken, O Israel, this day thou art become the people of the LORD thy God. 10. Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the LORD thy God, and do his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day.

Here is, 1. A general charge to the people to keep God's commandments, for in vain did they know them, unless they would do them. This is pressed upon them, (1.) With all authority. *Moses with the elders of Israel*, the rulers of each tribe, ver. 1. and again, ver. 9. *Moses and the priests, and Levites*; so that the charge is given by Moses who was king in Jeshurun, and by their lords, both spiritual and temporal, in concurrence with him. Lest they should think that it was Moses only, an old and dying man, that made such ado about religion, or the priests and Levites only whose trade it was to attend religion, and who had their maintenance out of it; the elders of Israel, whom God had placed in honour and power over them, and who were men of business in the world, and likely to be long so when Moses was gone, they commanded their people to *keep God's law*. Moses having put some of his honour upon them joins them in commission with himself, in giving this charge, as St Paul sometimes in his epistles joins with himself Silvanus, and Timotheus. Note, All that have any interest in others, or power over them, should use it for the support and furtherance of religion among them. Tho' the supreme power of a nation provide never so good laws for this purpose, if inferior magistrates in their places, and ministers in theirs, and masters of families in theirs, do not do their offices, it will all be to little effect. (2.) With all importunity. They press it upon them with the utmost earnestness, ver. 9, 10. *Take heed and hearken, O Israel.* It is a thing that requires and deserves the highest degree of caution and attention. They tell them of their privilege and honour, *this day thou art become the people of the Lord thy God*, the Lord having avouched thee to be his own, and being now about to put thee in possession of Canaan which he had long promised as *thy God*, *Gen. xvii. 7, 8.* and which if he had failed to do in due time, he would have been ashamed to be called thy God, *Heb. xi. 16.* now thou art more than ever his people, therefore *obey his voice*. Privileges should be improved as engagements to duty. Should not a people be ruled by their God?

2. A particular direction to them, with great solemnity, to register the words of this law, as soon as they were come into Canaan. It was to be done but once, and at their entrance into the land of promise, in token of their taking possession of it under the several proviso's and conditions contained in this law. There was a solemn ratification of the covenant between God and Israel at mount Sinai, there was an altar erected, and twelve pillars, and the book of the covenant was produced, *Exod. xxiv. 4.* That which is here appointed is a solemnity somewhat like that.

1. They must set up a monument on which they must write the words of this law. 1. The monument itself was to be very mean; only rough unhewn stones plaistered over; not polished marble, or alabaster, not brass tables, but common plaister upon stone; ver. 2. it is repeated again, ver. 4. and orders given that it be written, not very finely, to be admired by the curious, but very plainly, that he that run might read it, *Hab. ii. 1.* The word of God needs not to be set off by the art of man; nor embellished with the enticing words of man's wisdom. But, 2. The inscription was to be very great. *All the words of this law*, ver. 3. and

and again, *ver.* 8. Some understand it only of the covenant between God and Israel, mentioned, *chap.* xxvi. 17, 18. Let this heap be set up for a witness, like that memorial of the covenant between Laban and Jacob, which was nothing but a heap of stones thrown hastily together, upon which they did eat together in token of friendship, *Gen.* xxxi. 46, 47. and that stone which Joshua set up, *Josh.* xxiv. 27. Others think the curses of the covenant in this chapter were written upon this monument, the rather because it was set up in mount Ebal, *ver.* 4. Others think this whole book of Deuteronomy was written upon this monument; or at least the statutes and judgments which began at *chap.* xii. and so to the end of *chap.* xxvi. And it is not improbable, that the heap might be so large as taking in all the sides of it to contain so copious an inscription; unless we will suppose (as some do) that the ten commandments only were here written; as an authentick copy of the close rolls which were laid up in the ark. They must write this when they were gone into Canaan, and yet Moses saith, *ver.* 3. *Write it that thou mayest go in*, i. e. that thou mayest go in with comfort, and assurance of success and settlement, and otherwise as good not go in at all. Write it as the conditions of thine entry, and own that thou comest in upon these terms, and no other: since Canaan is given by promise, it must be held by obedience.

2. They must also set up an altar. By the words of the law which were written upon the plaister God spake to them: By the altar, and the sacrifices offered upon it, they spake to God, and thus was communion kept up between them and God. The word and prayer must go together. Tho' they might not of their own heads set up any altar besides that at the tabernacle, yet, by the appointment of God, they might, upon a special occasion. Elijah built an extempore altar of twelve unhewn stones like this here, when he brought Israel back to this covenant which was now made, *1 Kings* xviii. 31, 32. Now, 1. This altar must be made of such stones as they found ready upon the field, not new cut out of the rock, much less squared artificially, *thou shalt not lift up any iron tool upon them*, *ver.* 5. Christ, our altar, is a stone cut of the mountain without hands, *Dan.* ii. 34, 35. and therefore refused by the builders, as having no form or comeliness, but accepted of God the Father, and made the head of the corner. 2. Burnt-offerings and peace-offerings must be offered upon this altar, *ver.* 6, 7. that by them they might give glory to God, and obtain his favour. Where the law was written, an altar was set up, close by it, to signify, that we could not look with any comfort upon the law, being conscious to our selves of the violation of it, if it were not for the great sacrifice, by which atonement is made for sin; and the altar was set up on mount Ebal, the mount on which those tribes stood that said Amen to the curses, to intimate that through Christ we are redeemed from the curse of the law. In the Old Testament the words of the law are written, with the curse annexed which would fill us with horror and amazement, if we had not in the New Testament (which is bound up with it) an altar erected close by it, which gives us everlasting consolation. 3. They must eat there, and rejoice before the Lord their God, *ver.* 7. This signified, 1. The consent they gave to the covenant; for the parties to a covenant by feasting together ratified the covenant. They were partakers of the altar, which was God's table, as his servants and tenants, and so they acknowledged themselves, and being put in possession of this good land bound themselves to pay the rent, and do the services reserved by the royal grant. 2. The comfort they took in the covenant; they had reason to rejoice in the law, when they had an altar, a remedial law, so near it; it was a great favour to them, and a token for good, that God gave them his statutes; and that they were owned as the people of God, and the children of the promise, was what they had reason to rejoice in, tho' when this solemnity was to be performed, they were not put in full possession of Canaan; but God has spoken in his holiness, and then I will rejoice, Gilead is mine, Manasseh mine; all my own.

11. ¶ And Moses charged the people the same day, saying, 12. These shall stand upon mount Gerizzim to bless the people, when ye are come over Jordan; Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin. 13. And these shall stand upon mount Ebal to curse; Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali. 14. ¶ And the Levites shall speak, and say unto all the men of Israel with a loud voice, 15. Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination unto the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place: and all the people shall answer and say, Amen. 16. Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother: and all the people shall say, Amen. 17. Cursed be he that removeth his neighbours land-mark: and all the people shall say, Amen. 18. Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way: and all the people shall say, Amen. 19. Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow:

and all the people shall say, Amen. 20. Cursed be he that lieth with his fathers wife; because he uncovereth his fathers skirt: and all the people shall say, Amen. 21. Cursed be he that lieth with any manner of beast: and all the people shall say, Amen. 22. Cursed be he that lieth with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother: and all the people shall say, Amen. 23. Cursed be he that lieth with his mother in law: and all the people shall say, Amen. 24. Cursed be he that smiteth his neighbour secretly: and all the people shall say, Amen. 25. Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person: and all the people shall say, Amen. 26. Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them: and all the people shall say, Amen.

When the law was written to be seen and read by all men, the fancies of it were to be published, which, to compleat the solemnity of their covenanting with God, they were deliberately to declare their approbation of. This they were before directed to do, *chap.* xi. 29, 30. and therefore the appointment here begins somewhat abruptly; *ver.* 12. There were it seems in Canaan, that part of it which afterwards fell to the lot of Ephraim (Joshua's tribe) two mountains that lay near together, with a valley between, one called Gerizzim, and the other Ebal. On the sides of these two mountains which faced one another, all the tribes were to be drawn up, six on one side, and six on the other, so as that in the valley, at the foot of each mountain they came pretty near together, so near as that the priests standing betwixt them might be heard by those that were next them on both sides; then when silence was proclaimed, and attention commanded, one of the priests, or perhaps more at some distance from each other, pronounced with a loud voice one of the curses here following, and all the people that stood on the side and foot of mount Ebal, (those that stood further off taking the signal from those that stood nearer and within hearing) said Amen; then the contrary blessing was pronounced, Blessed is he that doth not so or so, and then those that stood on the side, and at the foot of mount Gerizzim said Amen. This could not but affect them very much with the blessings and curses, the promises and threatnings of the law, and not only acquaint all the people with them, but teach them to apply them to themselves.

1. Something is to be observed in general concerning this solemnity, which was to be done but once and not repeated, but would be talked of to posterity.

1. God appointed which tribes should stand upon mount Gerizzim, and which on mount Ebal, *ver.* 12, 13. to prevent the disputes that might have arisen if they had been to dispose of themselves. The six tribes that were appointed for blessing were all the children of the free women, for to such the promise belongs, *Gal.* iv. 31. Levi is here put among the rest, to teach ministers to apply to themselves the blessing and curse which they preach to others, and by faith to set their own Amen to it.

2. Of those tribes that were to say Amen to the blessings it is said, they stood to bless the people, but of the other that they stood to curse, not mentioning the people, as loth to suppose that any of this people whom God had taken for his own should lay themselves under the curse. Or, perhaps the different way of expression intimates, that there was to be but one blessing pronounced in general upon the people of Israel, as a happy people, and that should ever be so, *if they were obedient*; and to that blessing the tribes on mount Gerizzim, were to say Amen, Happy art thou, O Israel, and mayest thou ever be so; but then the curses come in as exceptions from the general rule, (and we know *exceptio firmat regulam*) Israel is a blessed people, but if there be any particular persons even among them, that do such and such things as are here mentioned, let them know that they have no part nor lot in the matter, but are under a curse. This shews how ready God is to bestow the blessing; if any fall under the curse they may thank themselves, they bring it upon their own heads.

3. The Levites or priests, such of them as were appointed for that purpose, were to pronounce the curses as well as the blessings, They were ordained to bless, *Deut.* x. 8. the priests did it daily. *Numb.* vi. 23. But they must separate between the precious and the vile; they must not give that blessing promiscuously, but must declare to whom it did not belong; lest those who had no right to it themselves, should think to share in it by being in the crowd. Note, Ministers must preach the terrors of the law, as well as the comforts of the gospel; must not only allure people to their duty with the promises of a blessing, but affright them to it with the threatnings of a curse.

4. The curses are here expressed, but not the blessings; for as many as were under the law, were under the curse; but it was an honour reserved for Christ to bless us, and so to do that for us which the law could not do in that it was weak. In Christ's sermon upon the mount, which was the true mount Gerizzim, we have blessings only, *Mat.* v. 3, &c.

5. To each of the curses, the people were to say, Amen. It is easy to understand the meaning of Amen to the blessings. The Jews have a saying to encourage people to say Amen to the public prayers, *Whosoever answereth Amen after him that blesteth, he is* as

as he that bleſſeth. But how could they ſay Amen to the curſes? 1. It was a profeſſion of their faith in the truth of it; that theſe, and the like curſes were not bug-bears to frighten children and fools, but the real declarations of the wrath of God againſt the ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men; not one *iota* of which ſhall fall to the ground. 2. It was an acknowledgment of the equity of theſe curſes; when they ſaid Amen, they did in effect ſay, not only *It is certain it ſhall be ſo*; but *it is juſt it ſhould be ſo*. They which do ſuch things well deſerve to fall and lie under the curſe. 3. It was ſuch an imprecation upon themſelves, as ſtrongly obliged them to have nothing to do with thoſe evil practices, upon which the curſe is here entailed. Let God's wrath fall upon us, if ever we do ſuch things. We read of thoſe that entered into a curſe (and with us that is the uſual form of a ſolemn oath) to *walk in Gods law*, Neh. x. 29. Nay, the Jews ſay, (as the learned biſhop Patrick quotes them) That all the people by ſaying this Amen, became bound for one another, that they would obſerve God's laws, by which every man was obliged, as far as he could, to prevent his neighbour from breaking theſe laws, and to reprove thoſe that had offended, leſt they ſhould bear ſin, and the curſe for them.

2. Let us now obſerve what are the particular ſins, againſt which the curſe is here denounced.

1. Sins againſt the ſecond commandment. This flaming ſword is ſet to keep that commandment firſt, *ver. 15*. They are here curſed, not only that worſhip images, but that make them or keep them, if they be ſuch (or like ſuch) as idolaters uſed in the ſervice of their gods, whether it be a graven image or a molten image, it comes all to one, it is *an abomination to the Lord*; tho' it be not ſet up in publick, but in a ſecret place, tho' it be not actually worſhipped, nor is it ſaid to be deſigned for worſhip, but reſerved there with reſpect, and a conſtant temptation, he that doth this may, perhaps, eſcape puniſhment from men, but he cannot eſcape the curſe of God.

2. Againſt the fifth commandment, *ver. 16*. the contempt of parents is a ſin ſo heinous, that it is put next to the contempt of God himſelf. If a man abuſed his parents, either in word or deed, he fell under the ſentence of the magiſtrate, and muſt be *put to death*, Exod. xxi. 15, 17. but to ſet light by them in his heart, was a thing which the magiſtrate could not take cognizance of, and therefore it is here laid under the curſe of God, who knows the heart. Thoſe are curſed children, that carry themſelves ſcornfully and inſolently towards their parents.

3. Againſt the eighth commandment. The curſe of God is here faſtened, (1.) Upon an unjuſt neighbour that *removes the land-marks*, *ver. 17*. See *chap. xix. 14*. (2.) Upon an unjuſt counſellor, who, when his advice is asked, maliciously directs his friend to that which he knows will be to his prejudice; which is *making the blind to wander out of the way*, under pretence of directing him in the way, than which nothing can be either more barbarous, or more treacherous, *ver. 18*. Thoſe that ſeduce others from the way of God's commandments, and entice them to ſin, bring this curſe upon themſelves, which our Saviour has explained, *Mat. xv. 14*. *The blind lead the blind, and both ſhall fall into the ditch*. (3.) Upon an unjuſt judge, that *perverted the judgment of the ſtranger, fatherleſs, and widow*, whom he ſhould protect and vindicate, *ver. 19*. Theſe are ſuppoſed to be poor and friendleſs, nothing to be got by doing them a kindneſs, nor any thing loſt by diſobliging them, and therefore judges were in temptation to ſide with their adverſaries againſt right and equity, but curſed are ſuch judges.

4. Againſt the ſeventh commandment. Inceſt is a curſed ſin, with a *ſiſter, a fathers wife, or a mother in law*, *ver. 20, 22, 23*. Theſe crimes not only expoſed men to the ſword of the magiſtrate, *Lev. xx. 11*. but, which is more dreadful, to the wrath of God; beſtiality likewise, *ver. 21*.

5. Againſt the ſixth commandment. Two of the worſt kinds of murder are inſtanced in, 1. Murder unſeen, when a man doth not ſet upon his neighbour as a fair adverſary, giving him an opportunity to defend himſelf, but *ſmites him ſecretly*, *ver. 24*. as by poiſon, or otherwiſe, when he ſees not who hurts him. See *Pſal. x. 8, 9*. Tho' ſuch ſecret murders may go undiſcovered, and unpuniſhed, yet the curſe of God will follow them. 2. Murder under colour of law, which is of all other the greateſt affront to God, for it makes an ordinance of his to patronize the worſt of villains; and the greateſt wrong to our neighbour, ruining his honour as well as his life; curſed therefore is he that will be hired, or bribed either to accuſe, or to convict, or to condemn, and ſo *to ſlay an innocent perſon*, *ver. 25*. See *Pſal. lv. 5*.

6. The ſolemnity concludes with a general curſe, upon him that confirmeth not, or, as it might be read, that *performeth not all the words of this law to do them*, *ver. 26*. By our obedience to the law we ſet our ſeal to it, and ſo confirm it, as by our diſobedience we do what lies in us to *diſannul it*, *Pſal. cxix. 126*. The apoſtle following all the ancient verſions reads it, *curſed is every one that continues not*, *Gal. iii. 10*. Leſt thoſe that were guilty of other ſins, not mentioned in this commination, ſhould think themſelves ſafe from the curſe, this laſt reaches all; not only thoſe that do the evil which the law forbids; but thoſe alſo who omit the good which the law requires: to this

we muſt all ſay Amen, owning our ſelves under the curſe, juſtly to have deſerved it, and that we muſt certainly have periſhed for ever under it, if Chriſt had not *redeemed us from the curſe of the law, by being made a curſe for us*.

C H A P. XXVIII.

This chapter is a very large expoſition of two words in the foregoing chapter, the *bleſſing* and the *curſe*. There theſe were pronounced bleſſed in general that were obedient, and thoſe curſed that were diſobedient; but becauſe generals are not ſo affecting, *Moses* here deſcends to particulars, and deſcribes the bleſſing and the curſe, not in their fountains, thoſe are out of ſight, and therefore the moſt conſiderable, yet leaſt conſidered, the favour of God the ſpring of all the bleſſings, and the wrath of God the ſpring of all the curſes; but in their ſtreams, the ſenſible effects of the bleſſing and the curſe, for they are real things, and have real effects. 1. He deſcribes the bleſſings that ſhould come upon them if they were obedient, perſonal, family and eſpecially national, for in that capacity eſpecially they are here treated with, *ver. 1—14*. 2. He more largely deſcribes the curſes, which would come upon them if they were diſobedient, ſuch as would be, 1. Their extreme vexation, *ver. 15—44*. 2. Their utter ruin and deſtruction at laſt, *45—67*. This chapter is much to the ſame purpoſe with *Lev. xxvi*. ſetting before them life and death, good and evil; and the promiſe in the cloſe of that chapter of their reſtoration upon their repentance is here likewise more largely repeated, *chap. xxx*. Thus as they had precept upon precept in the repetition of the law, ſo they had line upon line in the repetition of the promiſes and threatnings. And theſe are both there and here delivered, not only as ſanctions of the law what ſhould be conditionally, but as predictions of the event, what would be certainly, that for a while the people of *Israel* would be happy, in their obedience, but that at length they would be undone by their diſobedience, and therefore it is ſaid, *chap. xxx. 1*. That all theſe things would come upon them both the bleſſing and the curſe.

1. **A**ND it ſhall come to paſs, if thou ſhalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to obſerve and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day; that the LORD thy God, will ſet thee on high above all nations of the earth. 2. And all theſe bleſſings ſhall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou ſhalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God. 3. Bleſſed ſhalt thou be in the city, and bleſſed ſhalt thou be in the field. 4. Bleſſed ſhall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increaſe of thy kine, and the flocks of thy ſheep. 5. Bleſſed ſhall be thy basket and thy ſtore. 6. Bleſſed ſhalt thou be when thou comeſt in, and bleſſed ſhalt thou be when thou goeſt out. 7. The LORD ſhall cauſe thine enemies that riſe up againſt thee to be ſmitten before thy face: they ſhall come out againſt thee one way, and flee before thee ſeven ways. 8. The LORD ſhall command the bleſſing upon thee in thy ſtore-houſes, and in all that thou ſetteſt thine hand unto: and he ſhall bleſs thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. 9. The LORD ſhall eſtabliſh thee an holy people unto himſelf, as he hath ſworn unto thee, if thou ſhalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways. 10. And all people of the earth ſhall ſee that thou art called by the name of the LORD, and they ſhall be afraid of thee. 11. And the LORD ſhall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD ſware unto thy fathers to give thee. 12. The LORD ſhall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his ſeaſon, and to bleſs all the work of thine hand: and thou ſhalt lend unto many nations, and thou ſhalt not borrow. 13. And the LORD ſhall make thee the head and not the tail; and thou ſhalt be above only, and thou ſhalt not be beneath: if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day to obſerve and to do them: 14. And thou ſhalt not go aſide from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand or to the left, to go after other gods to ſerve them.

The bleſſings are here put before the curſes, to intimate, (1.) That God is ſlow to anger, but ſwift to ſhew mercy: he has ſaid it, and ſworn, that he would much rather we would obey and live, than ſin and die. It is his delight to bleſs. (2.) That tho' both the promiſes and the threatnings are deſigned to bring and hold us to our duty; yet it is better that we be allured to that which is good by a filial hope of God's favour,

favour, than that we be frightened to it by a servile fear of his wrath. That obedience pleaseth best, which comes from a principle of delight in God's goodness.

Now, 1. We have here the condition upon which the blessing is promised. (1.) It is upon condition, that they *diligently hearken to the voice of God*, ver. 1, 2. that they hear God speaking to them by his word, and use their utmost endeavour to acquaint themselves with his will, ver. 13. (2.) Upon condition that they *observe and do all his commandments*: and in order to obedience, there is need of observation: And that they *keep the commandments of God*, ver. 9. and *walk in his ways*. Not only do them for once; but keep them for ever; not only set out in his ways, but walk in them to the end. (3.) Upon condition, that they should not go aside either to the right hand or to the left, either to superstition on the one hand, or profaneness on the other; and particularly, that they should not go after other gods, ver. 14. Which was the sin that of all others they were most prone to, and God would be most displeased with. Let them take care to keep up religion, both the form and power of it, in their families and nation, and God would not fail to bless them.

2. The particulars of this blessing here promised.

1. It is promised, that the providence of God should prosper them in all their outward concerns. These blessings are said to overtake them, ver. 2. Good people sometimes in the sense of their own unworthiness, are ready to fly from the blessing, and to conclude it belongs not to them; but the blessing shall find them out and follow them notwithstanding: thus in the great day, the blessing will overtake the righteous that say, *Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee?* Matth. xxv. 37. It is promised,

(1.) That they should be safe and easy: a blessing should come upon their persons wherever they were, *in the city or in the field*, ver. 3. Whether their habitation was in the town or country; whether they were husbandmen or tradesmen; whether their business called them into the city or into the field, they should be preserved from the dangers of both, and have the comforts of both. This blessing should attend them in their journeys, going out and coming in, ver. 6. Their persons should be protected, and the affairs they went about should succeed well. Observe here, what a necessary and constant dependence we have upon God, both for the continuance and comfort of this life. We need him at every turn, in all the various moments of life: we cannot be safe if he withdraw his protection, nor easy if he suspend his favour: but if he bless us, go where we will, it is well with us.

(2.) That their families should be built up in a numerous issue, *blessed shall be the fruit of thy body*, ver. 4. and in that the Lord shall *make thee plenteous*, ver. 11. in pursuance of the promise made to Abraham, That his seed should be *as the stars of heaven* for multitude, and that God would be a God to them, than which a greater blessing, and more comprehensive, could not be entailed upon *the fruit of their body*. See Isa. lxi. 9.

(3.) That they should be rich, and have an abundance of all the good things of this life, which are promised them, not merely that they might have the pleasure of enjoying them, but (as bishop Patrick observes out of one of the Jewish writers) that they might have wherewithal to honour God, and might be helped and encouraged to serve him cheerfully, and to proceed and persevere in their obedience to him. A blessing is promised, 1. On all they had without-doors, corn and cattle in the field, ver. 4—11. Their cows and sheep particularly; which should be blessed for the owners sakes, and made blessings to them. In order to this it is promised, that God would give them *rain in due season*, which is called his *good treasure*, ver. 11. because with this *river of God* the earth is *enriched*, Psal. lxxv. 9. Our constant supplies we must see coming from God's good treasure, and own our obligations to him for them; if he withhold his rain, the fruits both of the ground and of the cattle soon perish. 2. On all they had within-doors, the basket and store, ver. 5. the store-houses or barns, ver. 8. When it is brought home God will bless it, and not blow upon it as sometimes he doth, Hag. i. 6, 9. We depend upon God and his blessing, not only for our yearly corn out of the field, but for our daily bread out of our basket and store, and therefore are taught to pray for it every day.

(4.) That they should have success in all their employments, which would be a constant satisfaction to them *the Lord shall command the blessing* (and it is he only that can command it) upon thee, not only in all thou hast, but in all thou doest, all *that thou settest thine hand unto*, ver. 8. This intimated, that even when they were rich, they must not be idle, but must find some good employment or other to set their hand to, and God would own their industry, and *bless the work of their hand*, ver. 12. for that which *makes rich and keeps so*, is the *blessing of the Lord upon the hand of the diligent*, Prov. x. 4, 22.

(5.) That they should have honour among their neighbours, ver. 1. *The Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations*. He made them so by taking them into covenant with himself, chap. xxvi. 19. And he would make them more and more so by their outward prosperity, if they would not by sin disparage

themselves. Two things should help to make them great among the nations. (1.) Their wealth, ver. 12. *Thou shalt lend to many nations upon interest*, which they were allowed to take from the neighbour nations, but thou shalt not have occasion to borrow. This would give them a mighty influence upon all about them; for the borrower is servant to the lender. It may be meant of trade and commerce, that they should export abundantly more than they should import, which would keep the balance on their side. (2.) Their power, ver. 13. *The Lord shall make thee the head*, to give law to all about them; to exact tribute, and to arbitrate all controversies. Every sheaf should bow to theirs; which should make them so considerable, that *all the people of the earth should be afraid of them*, ver. 10. i. e. should reverence their true grandeur, and dread making them their enemies. The flourishing of religion among them, and the blessing of God upon them, would make them formidable to all their neighbours, terrible as an army with banners.

(6.) That they should be victorious over their enemies, and prosper in all their wars. If any were so daring as to rise up against them to oppress them, or encroach upon them, it should be at their peril, they should certainly fall before them, ver. 7. The forces of the enemy, tho' entirely drawn up to come against them one way, should be entirely routed, and flee before them seven ways, each making the best of his way.

From the whole we learn, tho' it were well if men would believe it, that religion and piety is the best friend to outward prosperity. Tho' temporal blessings do not take up so much room in the promises of the New Testament, as they do in those of the Old, yet it is enough that our Lord Jesus has given us his word, (and sure we may take his word) that if we *seek first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof*, all other things shall be added to us, as far as infinite wisdom sees good, and who can desire it farther? Mat. vi. 33.

2. It is likewise promised, that the grace of God should *establish them a holy people*, ver. 9. Having taken them into covenant, with himself he would keep them in covenant, and provided they used the means of steadfastness, he would give them the grace of steadfastness, that they should not depart from him. Note, Those that are sincere in holiness, God will establish in holiness; and he is *of power to do it*, Rom. xvi. 25. He that is holy shall be holy still; and those whom God establisheth in holiness, he thereby establisheth a people to himself, for as long as we keep close to God he will never forsake us. This *establishment of their religion would be the establishment of their reputation*, ver. 10. *All the people of the earth shall see, and own, that thou art called by the name of the Lord*, i. e. that thou art a most excellent and glorious people under the particular care and countenance of the great God. They shall be made to know, that a people *called by the name of Jehovah*, is without doubt the happiest people under the sun, even their enemies themselves being judges. The favourites of heaven are truly great, and first or last it will be made to appear that they are so; if not in this world, yet at that day, when those who confess Christ now, shall be confessed by him before men and angels, as those whom he delights to honour.

15. ¶ But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee. 16. Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. 17. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. 18. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. 19. Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out. 20. The LORD shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto, for to do; until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings whereby thou hast forsaken me. 21. The LORD shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he have consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest to possess it. 22. The LORD shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew: and they shall pursue thee until thou perish. 23. And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron. 24. The LORD shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed. 25. The LORD shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them; and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth. 26. And thy carcase shall be meat unto all fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of

the earth, and no man shall fray *them* away. 27. The LORD will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed. 28. The LORD shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart. 29. And thou shalt grope at noon days, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed, and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save *thee*. 30. Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her: thou shalt build an house, and thou shalt not dwell therein: thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not gather the grapes thereof. 31. Thine ox *shall be* slain before thine eyes, and thou shalt not eat thereof: thine ass *shall be* violently taken away from before thy face, and shall not be restored to thee: thy sheep *shall be* given unto thine enemies, and thou shalt have none to rescue *them*. 32. Thy sons and thy daughters *shall be* given unto another people, and thine eyes shall look, and fail *with longing* for them all the day long: and *there shall be* no might in thine hand. 33. The fruit of thy land and all thy labours, shall a nation which thou knowest not, eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed alway: 34. So that thou shalt be mad, for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see. 35. The LORD shall smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore botch that cannot be healed, from the sole of thy foot unto the top of thy head. 36. The LORD shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone. 37. And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word, among all nations whither the LORD shall lead thee. 38. Thou shalt carry much feed out into the field, and shalt gather *but* little in: for the locust shall consume it. 39. Thou shalt plant vineyards and dress *them*, but shalt neither drink of the wine, nor gather *the grapes*: for the worms shall eat them. 40. Thou shalt have olive-trees throughout all thy coasts, but thou shalt not anoint *thy self* with the oyl: for thine olive shall cast *his fruit*. 41. Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them: for they shall go into captivity. 42. All thy trees and fruit of thy land shall the locust consume. 43. The stranger that *is* within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low. 44. He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail.

Having viewed the bright side of the cloud which is towards the obedient, we have now presented to us the black and dark side which is towards the disobedient. If we do not keep God's commandments, we not only come short of the blessing promised, that is not all, but we lay ourselves under the curse, which is as comprehensive of all misery, as the blessing is of all happiness. Observe,

1. The equity of this curse. It is not a curse causeless, or for some light cause; God seeks not occasion against us, nor is he apt to quarrel with us: That which is here mentioned as bringing the curse is, (1.) Despising God; refusing to *hearken to his voice*, ver. 15. which speaks the highest contempt imaginable, as if what he said were not worth the heeding, or we were not under any obligation to him. (2.) Disobeying him; *not doing his commandments*, or not observing to do them. None fall under his curse, but those that rebel against his command. (3.) Deserting him. It is because of *the wickedness of thy doings*, not only whereby thou hast slighted me, but *whereby thou hast forsaken me*, ver. 20. God never casts us off, till we first cast him off. It intimates, that their idolatry, by which they forsook the true God for false gods, would be their destroying sin, more than any other.

2. The extent and efficacy of this curse. These curses shall come upon thee from above, and shall overtake thee; tho' thou endeavour to escape them, it is to no purpose to attempt it, they shall follow thee whithersoever thou goest, and seize thee, overtake thee, and overcome thee, ver. 15. It is said of the sinner, when God's wrath is in pursuit of him, that he *would fain flee out of his hand*, Job xxvii. 22. but he cannot, if he *flee from the iron weapon*, yet *the bow of steel shall reach him and strike him through*. There is no running from God, but by running to him, no fleeing from his justice but by fleeing to his mercy. See *Psal.* xxi. 8. (1.) Wherever the sinner goes, the curse of God follows him, wherever he is it rests upon him. He is *curfed in the city, and in the field*, ver. 16. The strength of the city cannot shelter him from it, the pleasant air of the country is no fence against these pestilential steams. He is *curfed*, ver. 19.

when he comes in, for the curse is *upon the house of the wicked*, Prov. iii. 33. and he is *curfed* when he goes out, for he cannot leave that curse behind him, nor get rid of it, which is entered into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones. (2.) Whatever he has is under a curse, *curfed is the ground for his sake*, and all that is on it, or comes out of it, and so he is *curfed* from the ground, as Cain, *Gen.* iv. 11. The *basket and store* *curfed*, ver. 17, 18. All his enjoyments being forfeited by him, are in a manner forbidden to him, as *curfed* things, which he has no title to. To those whose *mind and conscience is defiled*, every thing else is so, *Tit.* i. 15. They are all imbittered to him, he cannot take any true comfort in them, for the wrath of God mixes itself with them, and he is so far from having any security of the continuance of them, that if his eyes be open he may see them all condemned, and ready to be confiscated, and with them all his joys, and all his hopes gone for ever. (3.) Whatever he doth is under a curse too. It is a curse in all that *he setteth his hand unto*, ver. 20. A constant disappointment which they are subject to, that set their hearts upon the world, and expect their happiness in it, and which cannot but be a constant vexation. This curse here is just the reverse of the blessing in the former part of the chapter. Thus whatever bliss there is in heaven, there is not only the want of it, but the contrary to it in hell, *Isa.* lxy. 13. *My servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry*.

Many particular judgments are here instanced in, which would be the fruits of the curse, and with which God would punish the people of the Jews for their apostasy and disobedience. 1. These judgments threatned are of divers kinds, for God has many arrows in his quiver, *four sore judgments*, *Ezek.* xiv. 21. and many more. 2. They are here represented very terrible, and the descriptions of them are exceeding lively and affecting, that men knowing these terrors of the Lord, might, if possible, be perswaded. 3. The threatnings of the same judgment are several times repeated, that they might make the more deep and lasting impressions; and to intimate that if they persisted in their disobedience, the judgment which they thought was over, and of which they said, surely the bitterness of it is past, would return with double force, for when God judgeth he will overcome.

1. Bodily diseases are here threatned; that they should be epidemical in their land. These God makes use of sometimes for the chastisement and improvement of his own people, *Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick*: But here they are threatned to be brought upon his enemies as tokens of his wrath, and designed for their ruin. So that according to the temper of our spirits, under sickness, accordingly it is to us a blessing or a curse. But whatever sickness may be to particular persons, it is certain epidemical diseases raging among a people are national judgments, and are so to be accounted. He here threatens (1.) Painful diseases, ver. 35. a sore botch beginning in the legs and knees, but spreading like Job's boils from head to foot. And, (2.) Shameful diseases, ver. 27. the botch of Egypt, (such boils and blains as the Egyptians had been plagued with, when God brought Israel from among them) and the emerods, and scab; vile diseases, the just punishment of those who by sin had made themselves vile. (3.) Mortal diseases. The pestilence, ver. 21. the consumption (put for all chronical diseases) and the fever (for all acute diseases) ver. 22. See *Lev.* xxvi. 16. and all incurable, ver. 27.

2. Famine, and scarcity of provisions; and this (1.) For want of rain, ver. 23, 24. *Thy heaven over thy head*, that part that is over thy land, *shall be as dry as brass*, while the heavens over other countries shall distil their dews: and when the heaven is *as brass*, the earth of course will be *as iron*, so hard and unfruitful. Instead of rain the dust shall be blown out of the highways into the field, and spoil that little that there is of the fruits of the earth. (2.) By destroying insects. The locusts should destroy the corn, so that they should not have so much as their *feed again*, ver. 38, 42. And the fruit of the vine which should make glad their hearts, should all be worm-eaten, ver. 39. And the olive, some way or other, should be made to *cast its fruit*, ver. 40. The heathen used many superstitious customs in honour of their idol gods, for the preserving the fruits of the earth: but Moses tells Israel, that the only way they had to preserve them was to keep God's commandments; for he is a God that will not be sported with, like their idols, but will be served in spirit and truth. This threatning, we find fulfilled in Israel, *1 Kings* xvii. 1. *Jer.* xiv. 1. *Joel* i. 4.

3. That they should be smitten before their enemies in war, who, it is likely, would be the more cruel to them, when they had them at their mercy, for the severity they had used against the nations of Canaan; which their neighbours in after-ages would be apt to remember against them, ver. 25. It would make their flight the more shameful, and the more grievous, that they might have triumphed over their enemies, if they had but been faithful to their God. The carcases of those that were slain in war, or died in captivity among strangers, should be *meat to the fowls*, ver. 26. And an Israelite, having forfeited the favour of his God, should have so little humanity shewed him, as that *no man should fray them away*; so odious would God's curse make them to all mankind.

4. That they should be infatuated in all their counsels, so as not to discern their own interest, nor bring any thing to pass for the

the publick good, *ver. 28; 29. The Lord shall smite thee with madness and blindness.* Note, God's judgments can reach the minds of men, to fill them with darkness and horror, as well as their bodies and estates; and those are the forest of all judgments, which make men a terror to themselves, and their own destroyers. That which they contrived to secure themselves by, should still turn to their prejudice. Thus we often find that the allies they confided in *distressed them, and helped them not, 2 Chron. xxviii. 20.* Those that will not walk in God's counsels, are justly left to be ruined by their own; and those that are wilfully blind to their duty, deserve to be made blind to their interest; and seeing they *loved darkness rather than light, let them grope at noon-day, as in the dark.*

5. That they should be plundered of all their enjoyments, stripped of all by the proud and imperious conqueror, such as Ben-hadad was to Ahab, *1 Kings xx. 5, 6.* Not only their houses and vineyards should be taken from them, but their wives and children, *ver. 30—32.* Their dearest comforts, which they took most pleasure in, and promised themselves most from, should be the entertainment and triumph of their enemies. As they had dwelt in houses which they builded not, and eaten of vineyards which they planted not, *chap. vi. 10, 11.* so others should do by them. Their oxen, asses, and sheep, like Job's, taken away before their eyes, and they should not be able to recover them, *ver. 31.* And all the fruit of their land and labours should be devoured and eaten up by the enemy; so that they and theirs would want necessaries, while their enemies were revelling with that which they had laboured for.

6. That they should be carried captives into a far country; nay, into *all the kingdoms of the earth, ver. 24.* Their sons and daughters, whom they promised themselves comfort in, should go into captivity, *ver. 41.* And they themselves at length, and their king in whom they promised themselves safety and settlement, *ver. 36.* This was fully accomplished, when the ten tribes first were carried captive into Assyria, *2 Kings xvii. 6.* and not long after the two tribes into Babylon, and two of their kings, *2 Kings xxiv. 14, 15.—xxv. 7, 21.* That which is mentioned as an aggravation of their captivity, is, that they should go into an unknown country, the language and customs of which would be very uncouth, and their treatment among them barbarous; and there they should *serve other gods, i. e.* be compelled to do so by their enemies, as they were in Babylon, *Dan. iii. 6.* Note, God often makes mens sin their punishment, and chuseth their delusions. Ye shall *serve other gods, i. e.* ye shall serve those that do serve them; a nation is often in scripture called by the name of its god, as *Jer. xlviii. 7.* They had made idolaters their associates, and now God made idolaters their oppressors.

7. That those which remained should be insulted and tyrannized over by strangers, *ver. 43, 44.* So the ten tribes were by the colonies which the king of Assyria sent to take possession of their land, *2 Kings xvii. 24.* Or, this may be meant of the gradual encroachments which the strangers within their gates should make upon them, so as insensibly to worm them out of their estates. We read of the fulfilling of this, *Hos. vii. 9. Strangers have devoured his strength;* foreigners eaten the bread out of the mouths of true born Israelites, by which they were justly chastised for introducing strange gods.

8. That their reputation among their neighbours should be quite sunk, and they that had been a name, and a praise, should be an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word, *ver. 37.* Some have observed the fulfilling of this threatening in their present state; for when we would express the most perfidious and barbarous treatment, we say, *None but a few would have done so.* Thus is sin a reproach to any people.

Lastly, To compleat their misery, it is threatned that they should be put quite out of the possession of their own souls by all these troubles, *ver. 34. Thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes, i. e.* quite bereaved of all comfort and hope, and abandoned to utter despair. Those that walk by sight, and not by faith, are in danger of losing reason itself, when every thing about them looks frightful; and their condition is woful indeed, that are *mad for the sight of their eyes.*

45. Moreover, all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed: because thou hearknedst not unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee. 46. And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever. 47. Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things: 48. Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the LORD shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee. 49. The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, *as swift as the eagle flieth,* a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand: 50. A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the per-

son of the old, nor shew favour to the young. 51. And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed: which *also* shall not leave thee *either* corn, wine, or oyl, *or* the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee. 52. And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, throughout all thy land which the LORD thy God hath given thee. 53. And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters (which the LORD thy God hath given thee) in the siege, and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee: 54. *So that* the man *that is* tender among you and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and towards the remnant of his children which he shall leave: 55. So that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children, whom he shall eat: because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates. 56. The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground, for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil towards the husband of her bosom, and towards her son, and towards her daughter, 57. And towards her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and towards her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates. 58. If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law, *that are* written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD; 59. Then the LORD will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, *even* great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance. 60. Moreover, he will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee. 61. Also every sickness, and every plague which is not written in the book of this law, them will the LORD bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed. 62. And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude: because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the LORD thy God. 63. And it shall come to pass, *that* as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you: so the LORD will rejoyce over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. 64. And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, *even* wood and stone. 65. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind. 66. And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee, and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life. 67. In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even: and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning, for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see. 68. And the LORD shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships by the way, whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bond-men and bond-women, and no man shall buy you.

One would have thought enough had been said to possess them with a dread of that *wrath of God, which is revealed from heaven, against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.* But to shew how deep the treasures of that wrath are, and that still there is more and worse behind: Moses, when one would have thought he had concluded this dismal subject, begins again, and adds to this roll of curses, many like words; as Jeremiah did to his, *chap. xxxvi. 32.* It should seem that in the former part of this commination, Moses foretels their captivity in Babylon, and the calamities which introduced and attended that, by which even after their return they were brought to that low and poor condition, which is described *ver. 44.* That their enemies should be *the head,* and they *the tail:* but here in this latter part, he foretels their last destruction by the Romans, and their dispersion thereupon. And the present deplorable

ble state of the Jewish nation, and of all that have incorporated themselves with them by embracing their religion, doth so fully and exactly answer this prediction here in these verses, that it serves for an incontestible proof of the truth of prophecy, and consequently of the divine authority of the scripture. And this last destruction being here represented more dreadful than the former, it shews that their sin in rejecting Christ and his gospel, was more heinous and more provoking to God than idolatry itself, and left them more under the power of Satan; for their captivity in Babylon cured them effectually of their idolatry in seventy years time; but under this last destruction now for above 1600 years, they continue incurably averse to the Lord Jesus.

Observe, 1. What is here said in general of the wrath of God, which should light and lie upon them for their sins.

1. That if they would not be ruled by the commands of God, they should certainly be ruined by his curse, ver. 45, 46. Because thou didst not keep his commandments, (especially that of hearing and obeying the great prophet) these curses shall come upon thee, as upon a people appointed to destruction, the generation of God's wrath: and they shall be for a sign and for a wonder. It is amazing to think, That a people so long the favourites of heaven, should be so perfectly abandoned and cast off: that a people so closely incorporated, should be so universally dispersed; and yet that a people so scattered in all nations, should preserve themselves distinct, and not mix with any; but, like Cain, be fugitives and vagabonds, and yet marked to be known.

2. That if they would not serve God with cheerfulness, they should be compelled to serve their enemies, ver. 47, 48. that they might know the difference, 2 Chron. xii. 8. which some think is the meaning of Ezek. xx. 24, 25. Because they despised my statutes, I gave them statutes that were not good. Observe here, 1. It is justly expected from those to whom God gives an abundance of the good things of this life, that they should serve him. What doth he maintain us for but that we may do his work, and be some way serviceable to his honour? 2. The more God gives us, the more cheerfully we should serve him; our abundance should be oil to the wheels of our obedience. God is a master that will be served with gladness, and delights to hear us sing at our work. 3. If when we receive the gifts of God's bounty, we either do not serve him at all, or serve him with reluctancy, it is a righteous thing with him to make us know the hardships of want and servitude. They deserve to have cause given them to complain, who complain without a cause. *Tristis es, & fœlix!* Happy, and yet not easy! blush at thy own folly and ingratitude.

3. That if they would not give glory to God by an awful obedience, he would get him honour upon them by wonderful plagues, ver. 58, 59. Note, 1. God justly expects from us that we should fear his fearful name: and, which is strange, that name which is here proposed as the object of our fear, is, *The Lord thy God*, which is very fitly here put in our bibles, in capital letters; for nothing can sound more truly august. As nothing is more comfortable, so nothing more awful than this, That he with whom we have to do is Jehovah, a being infinitely perfect and blessed, and the author of all being; and that he is our God, our rightful Lord and owner, from whom we are to receive laws, and to whom we are to give accompt: this is great, and greatly to be feared. 2. We may justly expect from God, that if we do not fear his fearful name, we should feel his fearful plagues; for one way or other God will be feared. All God's plagues are dreadful; but some are wonderful, which carry in them extraordinary signatures of divine power and justice, so that a man upon the first view of them, may say, *Verily, there is a God that judgeth in the earth.*

2. How the destruction threatned is described. Moses is here upon the same melancholy subject that our Saviour is discoursing of to his disciples in his farewell sermon, *Mat. xxiv.* viz. The destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation.

Five things are here foretold, as steps to their ruin:

1. That they should be invaded by a foreign enemy, ver. 49, 50. A nation from far, viz. the Romans, as swift as the eagle, hastning to the prey; our Saviour makes use of this similitude, in foretelling this destruction, that *where the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together*, *Matth. xxiv. 28.* And bishop Patrick observes, (to make the accomplishment the more remarkable) that the ensign of the Roman armies, was an eagle. This nation is said to be of a fierce countenance, an indication of a fierce nature, stern and severe, that would not pity the weakness and infirmity either of little children, or of old people.

2. That the country should be laid waste, and all the fruits of it eaten up by this army of foreigners; which is the natural consequence of an invasion, especially when it is made as the Romans was, for the chastisement of rebels, ver. 51. He shall eat the fruit of thy cattle and land, so that the inhabitants should be starved, while the invaders were fed to the full.

3. That their cities should be besieged, and that such would be the obstinacy of the besieged, and such the vigour of the besiegers, that they would be reduced to the last extremity, and at length fall into the hands of the enemy, ver. 52. No place, tho' never so well fortified, no, not Jerusalem itself, tho' it held out long, would escape. Two of the common consequences of a

long siege are here foretold. 1. A miserable famine, which would prevail to that degree, that for want of food, they should kill and eat their own children, ver. 53. Men should do so, notwithstanding their hardiness, and ability to bear hunger; and tho' obliged by the law of nature to provide for their own families, yet should refuse to give to the wife and children that were starving any of the child that was barbarously butchered, ver. 54, 55. Nay, that women, ladies of quality, notwithstanding their natural niceness about their food, and their natural affection to their children, yet, for want of food, should so far forget all humanity as to kill and eat them, ver. 56, 57. Let us observe by the way how hard this fate must needs be to the tender and delicate women, and learn not to indulge ourselves in tenderness and delicacy, because we know not what we may be reduced to before we die, and the more nice we are, the harder it will be to us to bear want, and the more danger we shall be in of sacrificing reason, and religion, and natural affection itself, to the clamors and cravings of an unmortified ungoverned appetite. This threatning was fulfilled in the letter of it, more than once, to the perpetual reproach of the Jewish nation: never was the like done either by Greek or Barbarian, but in the siege of Samaria, a woman boiled her own son, 2 Kings vi. 28, 29. And it is spoken of as commonly done among them in the siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, *Lam. iv. 10.* And in the last siege by the Romans, Josephus tells us of a noble woman that killed and eat her own child, through the extremity of the famine, and when she had eaten one half secretly, ver. 57. that she might have it to herself, the mob smelling meat, got into the house, to whom she shewed the other half, which she had kept till another time, inviting them to share with her. What is too barbarous for them to do, that are abandoned of God? Sickness is another common effect of a strait and long siege; and that is here threatned: *fore sicknesses, and of long continuance*, ver. 59. These should attend the Jews wherever they went afterwards, the diseases of Egypt, leprosy, botches, and foul ulcers, ver. 60. Nay, as if the particular miseries here threatned were not enough, he concludes with an, &c. ver. 61. The Lord will bring upon thee every sickness, and every plague, tho' it be not written in the book of this law. Those that fall under the curse of God, will find that the one half was not told them of the weight and terror of that curse.

4. That multitudes of them should perish; so that they should become few in number, ver. 62. It was a nation that God had wonderfully increased, so that they were as the stars of heaven for multitude; but for their sin diminished and brought low, *Psal. cvii. 38, 39.* It is computed that in the destruction of the Jewish nation by the Romans, as appears by the account Josephus gives of it, there were above two millions that fell by the sword, at several places, besides what perished by famine and pestilence; so that the whole country was laid waste and turned into a wilderness. That is a terrible word, ver. 63. *As the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, so he will rejoice over you to destroy you.* Behold here the goodness and severity of God: mercy here shines bright in the pleasure God takes in doing good; he rejoiceth in it: yet justice here appears no less illustrious in the pleasure he takes in destroying the impenitent; not as it is the making of his creatures miserable, but as it is the asserting of his own honour, and the securing of the ends of his government. See what a malignant mischievous thing sin is, which (as I may say) makes it necessary for the God of infinite goodness to rejoice in the destruction of his own creatures, even those that had been favourites.

5. That the remnant should be scattered throughout the nations. This compleats their wo, ver. 64. *The Lord shall scatter thee among all people.* This is remarkably fulfilled in their present dispersion, for there are Jews to be found almost in all countries that are possessed either by Christians or Mahometans, and in such numbers, that it has been said, if they could unite in one common interest, they would be a very formidable body, and able to deal with the most powerful states and princes, but they abide under the power of this curse, and are so scattered as that they are not able to incorporate. It is here foretold, that in this dispersion (1.) They should have no religion, or none to any purpose, should have neither temple nor altar, nor priesthood, for they should serve other gods. Some think this has been fulfilled in the force put upon the Jews in Popish countries, to worship the images that are used in the Romish church to their great vexation. 2. They should have no rest; no rest of body, *the sole of thy foot shall not have rest*, ver. 65. but be continually upon the remove either in hope of gain, or fear of persecution; all wandering Jews: no rest of the mind (which is much worse) but a trembling heart, ver. 65. *no assurance of life*, ver. 66. weary both of light and darkness, which are in their turns both welcome to a quiet mind, but to them both day and night would be a terror, ver. 67. Such a toilsome Job was in once, (*Job vii. 4.*) but to them this should be constant and perpetual; that blindness and darkness which the apostle speaks of as having happened to Israel, and that guilt which bowed down their back alway, *Rom. xi. 8, 9, 10.* must needs occasion a constant restlessness and amazement. These are a torment to themselves and to all about them that fear day and night; and are always uneasy; let good people strive against it, and not give way to that fear which has torment; and let wicked people not be secure in their wickedness, for their hearts cannot endure, nor can their

their hands be strong, when the terrors of God set themselves in array against them. They that say in the morning, *O that it were even*, and in the evening *O that it were morning*, shew, 1. A constant fret and vexation, chiding the hours for lingring, and complaining of the length of every minute; let time be precious to us when we are in prosperity, and then it will not be so tedious to us when we are in afflictions as otherwise it would. 2. A constant fright, and terror; afraid in the morning of the arrow that flieth by day, and therefore wishing the day over, and what the better? When evening comes, the trembling heart is no less apprehensive of the terror by night, Psal. xci. 5, 6. Happy they whose minds being staid on God are quiet from the fear of evil. Observe here, the terror ariseth not only from the sight of the eyes, but from the fear of the heart, not only from the real dangers, but from imaginary ones; the causes of fear many times when they come to be enquired into, prove to be only the creatures of the fancy.

Lastly, In the close God threatens to leave them as he found them in a house of bondage, ver. 68. *The Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again, i. e. into such a miserable state as they were in when they were slaves to the Egyptians, and ruled by them with rigour.* God had brought them out of Egypt, and had said, *they should see it no more again*, Deut. xvii. 16. but now they should be reduced to the same state of slavery that they had been in there. To be sold to strangers would be bad enough, but much worse to be sold to their enemies. And even slaves may be valued as such, but a Jew should be in so ill a name for all that is nought, that when he was exposed to sale no man should buy him, which would make his master that had him to sell, the more severe with him. Thirty Jews (they say) have been sold for one small piece of money, as they sold our Saviour for thirty pieces.

Now upon the whole matter; 1. The accomplishment of these predictions upon the Jewish nation shews, that Moses spake by the Spirit of God, who certainly foresees the ruin of sinners, and gives them warning of it, that they may prevent it by a true and timely repentance, or else be left inexcusable. 2. Let us all from hence learn to stand in awe, and not to sin. I have heard of a wicked man, who upon reading the threatnings of this chapter was so enraged, that he tore the leaf out of his Bible, as Jehoiakim cut Jeremiah's roll; but to what purpose is it to deface a copy, while the original remains upon record in the divine counsels, by which it is unalterably determined, that the wages of sin is death, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear.

C H A P. XXIX.

The first words of this chapter are the contents of it; These are the words of the covenant, ver. 1. *these that follow*; Here is, 1. A recital of God's dealings with them, in order to the bringing of them into this covenant, ver. 2—8. 2. A solemn charge to them to keep the covenant, ver. 9. 3. An abstract of the covenant itself, ver. 12, 13. 4. A specification of the persons taken into the covenant, ver. 10, 11, 14, 15. 5. An intimation of the great design of this covenant against idolatry, in a parenthesis, ver. 16, 17. 6. A most solemn and dreadful denunciation of the wrath of God, against such persons as promise themselves peace in a sinful way, ver. 18—28. 7. The conclusion of this treaty, with a distinction between things secret, and things revealed, ver. 29.

1. **THESE** are the words of the covenant which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel, in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb. 2. ¶ And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; 3. The great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs and those great miracles: 4. Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day. 5. And I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot. 6. Ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine, or strong drink: that ye might know that I am the LORD your God. 7. And when ye came unto this place, Sihon the king of Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, came out against us unto battle, and we smote them. 8. And we took their land, and gave it for an inheritance unto the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to the half-tribe of Manasseh. 9. Keep therefore the words of this covenant and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do.

Now Moses had largely repeated the commands which the people were to observe as their part of the covenant, and the promises and threatnings which God would make good (according to No. xiv.

ing as they behaved themselves) as his part of the covenant; the whole is here summed up in a federal transaction. The covenant formerly made is here renewed, and Moses, that was before, is still the mediator of it, ver. 1. *The Lord commanded Moses to make it.* Moses himself, tho' king in Jeshurun, could not make the covenant any otherwise than as God gave him instructions. It doth not lie in the power of ministers to fix the terms of the covenant, they are only to dispense the seals of it. This is said to be *beside the covenant made in Horeb*; for tho' the covenant was the same, yet it was a new promulgation and ratification of it. It is probable, some now living, tho' not of age to be mustered, were of age to consent for themselves to the covenant made at Horeb, and yet it is here renewed: Note, Those that have solemnly covenanted with God, should take all opportunities to do it again, as those that like their choice too well to change. But the far greater part were a new generation, and therefore the covenant must be made afresh with them, for it is fit the covenant should be renewed to the children of the covenant.

It is usual for indentures to begin with a recital; this doth so; with a rehearsal of the great things God had done for them. 1. As an encouragement to them, to believe that God would indeed be to them a God, for he would not have done so much for them, if he had not designed more, to which all he had hitherto done was but a preface (as it were) or introduction; nay, he had shewed himself a God in what he had hitherto done for them, which might raise their expectations of something great, and answering the vast extent and compass of that pregnant promise, that God would be to them a God. 2. As an engagement upon them to be to him an obedient people, in consideration of what he had done for them.

For the proof of what he here advanceth, he appeals to their own eyes, ver. 2. *Ye have seen all that the Lord did.* Their own senses were incontestible evidence of the matter of fact, that God had done great things for them; and then their own reason was a no less competent judge of the equity of his inference from it, ver. 9. *Keep therefore the words of this covenant.*

These things he instanceth in to shew the power and goodness of God in his appearances for them. (1.) Their deliverance out of Egypt, ver. 2, 3. The amazing signs and miracles by which Pharaoh was plagued, and compelled to dismiss them, and Israel was tried, (for they are called temptations) whether they would trust God to secure them from, and save them by, those plagues. (2.) Their conduct through the wilderness for forty years, ver. 5, 6. There they were led, and clad, and fed by miracles; tho' the paths of the wilderness were not only unknown, but untrodden, yet God kept them from being lost there; and (as bishop Patrick observes) those very shoes, which by the appointment of God they put on in Egypt at the passover when they were ready to march, (Exod. xii. 11.) never wore out, but served them to Canaan: and tho' they lived not upon bread which strengthens the heart, and wine which rejoiceth it, but upon manna, and rock water, yet they were men of strength and courage, mighty men, and able to go forth to war. By these miracles they were made to know that the Lord is God, and by these mercies, that he was their God. (3.) The victory they had lately obtained over Sihon, and Og, and that good land which they had taken possession of, ver. 7, 8. Both former mercies, and fresh mercies should be improved by us as inducements to obedience.

By way of inference from these memoirs, (1.) Moses laments their stupidity, ver. 4. *Yet the Lord has not given you a heart to perceive.* This doth not lay the blame of their senselessness, and foolishness, and unbelief, upon God, as if they had stood ready to receive his grace, and had begged for it, but he had denied them; no, but it fastens the guilt upon themselves. The Lord, who is the Father of spirits, a God in covenant with you, and who had always been so rich in mercy to you, no doubt would have crowned all his other gifts with this, he would have given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see, if you had not by your own frowardness and perverseness frustrated his kind intentions, and received his grace in vain. Note, 1. The hearing ear, the seeing eye, and the understanding heart, are the gift of God. All that have them, have them from him. 2. God gives, not only food and raiment, but wealth, and large possessions to many to whom he doth not give grace. Many enjoy the gifts, that have not hearts to perceive the giver, nor the true intention and use of the gifts. 3. God's readiness to do us good in other things, is a plain evidence that if we have not grace, that best of gifts, it is our own fault and not his; he would have gathered us, and we would not. (2.) Moses chargeth them to be obedient, ver. 9. *Keep therefore and do.* Note, We are bound in gratitude and interest, as well as duty and faithfulness to keep the words of the covenant.

10. ¶ Ye stand this day all of you before the LORD your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel, 11. Your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood, unto the drawer of thy water: 12. That thou shouldest enter into covenant with

with the LORD thy God, and into his oath, which the LORD thy God maketh with thee this day: 13. That he may establish thee to day for a people unto himself, and *that* he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. 14. Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath; 15. But with *him* that standeth here with us this day before the LORD our God, and also with *him* that is not here with us this day: 16. (For ye know how we have dwelt in the land of Egypt, and how we came through the nations which ye passed by. 17. And ye have seen their abominations, and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which *were* among them) 18. Lest there should be among you man or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go *and* serve the gods of these nations: lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood, 19. And it come to pass when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: 20. The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD, and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses *that are* written in this book shall lie upon him and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven. 21. And the LORD shall separate him unto evil, out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant, *that are* written in this book of the law: 22. So that the generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the LORD hath laid upon it; 23. *And that* the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, *that* it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger and in his wrath: 24. Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this land? What *meaneth* the heat of this great anger? 25. Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt. 26. For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods whom they knew not, and *whom* he had not given unto them. 27. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses *that are* written in this book. 28. And the LORD rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as *it is* this day. 29. The secret *things* belong unto the LORD our God: but those *things* which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

It appears by the length of the sentences here, and by the copiousness and pungency of the expressions, that Moses, now he was drawing near to the close of his discourse, was very warm and zealous, and very desirous to impress what he said upon the minds of this unthinking people: To bind them the faster to God and duty, he here, with great solemnity of expression, (to make up the want of the external ceremony that was used, *Exod.* xxiv. 4, &c.) concludes a bargain (as it were) between them and God, an everlasting covenant which God would not forget, and they must not. He requires not their explicit consent, but lays the matter plainly before them, and then leaves it between God and their own consciences. Observe,

1. The parties to this covenant, (1.) It is the Lord their God they are to covenant with, *ver.* 12. To him they must give up themselves, to him they must join themselves. It is his oath; he has drawn up the covenant, and settled it; he requires your consent to it; he has sworn to you, and to him you must be sworn. This requires us to be sincere and serious, humble and reverent in our covenant transactions with God, remembering how great a God he is with whom we are covenanting, who has a perfect knowledge of us, and an absolute dominion over us. (2.) They are all to be taken into covenant with him. They were all summoned to attend, *ver.* 2. and did accordingly, and are told, *ver.* 10. what was the design of their appearing before God now, in a body, they were to enter into covenant with him. 1. Even their great men; the captains of their tribes, their elders and officers, must not think it any disparagement to their honour, or any diminution of their power to put their necks under the yoke of this covenant, and to draw in it. They must

rather first enter into the covenant, to set a good example to their inferiors. 2. Not the men only, but their wives and children must come into this covenant; tho' they were not numbered, and mustered, yet they must be *joined to the Lord*, *ver.* 11. Observe, Even little ones are capable of being taken into covenant with God, and are to be admitted with their parents. Little children, so little as to be carried in arms, must be brought to Christ, and shall be blessed by him, for *of such* was, and *is, the kingdom of God*. 3. Not the men of Israel only, but the stranger that was in their camp, provided he was so far profelyted to their religion, as to renounce all false gods, was taken into this covenant with the God of Israel, forasmuch as he also, tho' a stranger, was to be looked upon in this matter as a *son of Abraham*, *Luke* xix. 9. This was an early indication of favour to the Gentiles, and that kindness God had in store for them. 4. Not the freemen only, but the hewers of wood, and drawers of water, the meanest drudge they had among them: Note, As none are too great to come under the bonds of the covenant; so none are too mean to inherit the blessings of the covenant. In Christ no difference is made between *bond and free*, *Col.* iii. 11. *Art thou called being a servant? care not for it*, *1 Cor.* vii. 21. 5. Not only those that were now present before God in this solemn assembly, but those also that were not here with them, were taken into covenant, *ver.* 15. *As with him that standeth here with us*; (so bishop Patrick thinks it should be rendered) *so also with him that is not here with us this day*, that is, 1. Those that tarried at home were included, that were detained either by sickness, or necessary business, they must not therefore think themselves disengaged; no, every Israelite shares in the common blessings, they that tarry at home divide the spoil, and therefore every Israelite must own himself bound by the consent of the representative body. They who cannot go up to the house of the Lord, must keep up a spiritual communion with those that do, and be present in spirit when they are absent in body. 2. The generations to come are included. Nay, one of the Chaldee paraphrasts reads it, *All the generations that have been from the first days of the world, and all that shall arise to the end of the whole world, stand with us here this day*: And so, taking this covenant as a typical dispensation of the covenant of grace, it is a noble testimony to the mediator of that covenant, who is *the same yesterday, to day, and for ever*.

2. The summary of this covenant; all the precepts and all the promises of the covenant, are included in the covenant relation between God and them, *ver.* 13. That they should be appointed, raised up, *established for a people to him*, to observe and obey him, to be devoted to him, and dependent on him, and that he should be to them a God, according to the tenor of the covenant made with their fathers, to make them holy, high, and happy. Their fathers are here named, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as examples of piety, which those must set themselves to imitate, who expected any benefit by the covenant made with them. Note, A due consideration of the relation we stand in to God, as our God, and the obligation we lie under as a people to him, is enough to bring us to all the duties, and all the comforts of that covenant.

3. The principal design of the renewing of this covenant at this time, was to fortify them against temptations to idolatry. Tho' other sins will be the sinners ruin; yet this was the sin that was likely to be their ruin. Now concerning this, he shews,

1. The danger they were in of being tempted to it, *ver.* 16, 17. *You know we have dwelt in the land of Egypt*, a country addicted to idolatry, and it was well, if there were not to this day among them some remains of the infection of that idolatry; we have passed by other nations, the Edomites, Moabites, &c. and have seen their abominations, and their idols, and some among you, it may be, have liked them too well, and still hanker after them, and would rather worship a wooden god that they can see, than an infinite spirit whom they never saw. It is hoped, there were those among them, who the more they saw of these abominations and idols, the more they hated them; but there were those that were smitten with the sight of them, saw these accursed things, and coveted them.

2. The danger they were in, if they yielded to the temptation. He gives them fair warning; it was at their peril if they forsook God to serve idols. If they would not be bound and held by the precepts of the covenant, they would find that the curses of the covenant would be strong enough to bind and hold them.

1. Idolatry would be the ruin of particular persons and their families, *ver.* 18—21. Where observe,

(1.) The sinner described, *ver.* 18. (1.) He is one whose heart turns away from his God; there the mischief begins, in the *evil heart of unbelief, which inclines men to depart from the living God* to dead idols. Even to this sin men are tempted, when they are drawn aside by their own lusts and fancies. They that begin to turn from God, by neglecting their duty to him, are easily drawn to other gods: and they that serve other gods, do certainly turn away from the true God; for he will admit no rivals; he will be all, or nothing. (2.) He is a root that bears gall and wormwood; *i. e.* He is a dangerous man, that being himself poisoned with ill principles and inclinations, with a secret contempt of the God of Israel, and his institutions, and a veneration for the gods of the nations, endeavours by all arts possible to corrupt and poison others, and draw them to idolatry: this is a man whose fruit is hemlock

hemlock (so the word is translated, *Hof. x. 4.*) and wormwood, it is very displeasing to God, and will be to all that are seduced by him, *Bitterness in the latter end.* This is referred to by the apostle, *Heb. xii. 15.* Where he is in like manner cautioning us to take heed of those that would seduce us from the Christian faith, they are the weeds or tares in a field, which, if let alone, will overspread the whole field. A little of this leaven will be in danger of infecting the whole lump.

(2.) His security in the sin. He promiseth himself impunity, tho' he persist in his impiety, *ver. 19.* Tho' he *heareth the words of the curse*, so that he cannot plead ignorance of the danger, as other idolaters; yet even then, he *blesseth himself in his own heart*, thinks himself safe from the wrath of the God of Israel, under the protection of his idol-gods, and *therefore saith, I shall have peace*, tho' I be governed in my religion not by God's institution, but by my own imagination, to add drunkenness to thirst; one act of wickedness to another. Idolaters were like drunkards, violently set upon their idols themselves, and industrious to draw others in with them. Revellings commonly accompanied their idolatries, *1 Pet. iv. 3.* so that this speaks a wo to drunkards, (especially the drunkards of Ephraim) who when they are awake, being thirsty, *seek it yet again*, *Prov. xxiii. 35.* And those that made themselves drunk in honour of their idols, were the worst of drunkards. Note, 1. There are many who are under the curse of God, and yet bless themselves; but it will soon be found that in blessing themselves, they do but deceive themselves. 2. Those are ripe for ruin, and there is little hopes of their repentance, who have made themselves believe that they shall have peace though they go on in a sinful way. 3. Drunkenness is a sin that hardens the heart, and debaucheth the conscience as much as any other, to which men are strangely tempted themselves, even when they have newly felt the mischiefs of it, and are strangely fond to draw others to, *Hab. ii. 15.* And such an ensnaring sin is idolatry.

(3.) God's just severity against him for the sin, and for that impious affront he put upon God, in saying, he should have peace, tho' he went on, so giving the lie to eternal truth, (*Gen. iii. 4.*) There is scarce a threatening in all the book of God that sounds more dreadful than this here. O that presumptuous sinners would read it and tremble! For it is not a bug-bear to frighten children and fools, but a real declaration of the wrath of God against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, *ver. 20, 21.* (1.) *The Lord shall not spare him.* The days of his reprieve, which he abuseth, will be shortned, and no mercy remembered in the midst of judgment. (2.) *The anger of the Lord, and his jealousy*, which is the fiercest anger, *shall smoke against him*, like the smoke of a furnace. (3.) *The curses written shall lie upon him*, not only light upon him to terrify him, but *abide upon him*, to sink him to the lowest hell, *Joh. iii. 36.* (4.) *His name shall be blotted out, i. e.* he himself shall be cut off, and his memory shall rot, and perish with him. (5.) He shall be *separated unto evil*, which is the most proper notion of a curse; he shall be cut off from all happiness, and all hope of it, and marked out for misery, without remedy. And (lastly) All this *according to the curses of the covenant*, which are the most fearful curses, being the just revenges of abused grace.

2. Idolatry would be the ruin of their nation; it would bring plagues upon the land that connived at this root of bitterness, and received the infection: as far as the sin spread, the judgment should spread likewise.

1. The ruin is described. It begins with plagues and sicknesses, *ver. 22.* to try if they will be reclaimed by lesser judgments; but if not, it ends in a total overthrow, like that of Sodom, *ver. 23.* As that valley which had been like the garden of the Lord for fruitfulness, was turned into a lake of salt and sulphur, so should the land of Canaan be made desolate and barren, as it has been ever since the last destruction of it by the Romans. The lake of Sodom bordered close upon the land of Israel, that by it they might be warned against the iniquity of Sodom; but, not taking the warning, they were made as like to Sodom in ruin as they had been in sin.

2. The reason of it is enquired into, and assigned.

1. It would be enquired into by the *generations to come*, *ver. 22.* who would find the state of their nation in all respects the reverse of what it had been; and when they read both the history and the promise, would be astonished at the change. The stranger likewise, and the nations about them, as well as particular persons, would ask, *Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land?* *ver. 24.* Great desolations are thus represented elsewhere as striking the spectators with amazement, *1 Kings ix. 8, 9.* *Jer. xxii. 8, 9.* It was time for the neighbours to tremble, when judgment thus *began at the house of God*, *1 Pet. iv. 17.* The emphasis of the question is to be laid upon this land; the land of Canaan; this good land, the glory of all lands; this land flowing with milk and honey: A thousand pities that such a good land as this should be made desolate; but that is not all; it is this holy land; the land of Israel, a people in covenant with God; it is Immanuel's land; a land where God was known and worshipped, and yet thus wasted. Note, 1. It is no new thing for God to bring desolating judgments upon a people that in profession are near to him, *Amos iii. 2.* 2. He never doth this, but there

is a good reason why and wherefore he doth it. 3. It concerns us to enquire into the reason, that we may give glory to God, and take warning to our selves.

2. The reason is here assigned, in answer to that enquiry. The matter would be so plain, that all men would say, It was because they *forsook the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers*, *ver. 25.* Note, God never forsakes any, till they first forsake him: But those that desert the God of their fathers, are justly cast out of the inheritance of their fathers. They went and *served other gods*, *ver. 26.* gods that they had no acquaintance with, nor lay under any obligation to, either in duty or gratitude; for God had not given the creatures to be served by us, but to serve us; nor had they done any good to us; (as some read it) more than what God enabled them to do; to the Creator therefore we are debtors, and not to the creatures. It was for this that God was angry with them, *ver. 27.* and *rooted them out in anger*, *ver. 28.* So that how dreadful soever the desolation was, the Lord was righteous in it, which is acknowledged, *Dan. iv. 11, 12.* Thus (saith Mr Ainsworth) the law of Moses leaves sinners under the curse, and *rooted out of the Lord's land*; but grace in Christ towards penitent believing sinners, plants them again *upon their land*, and *they shall no more be pulled up*, being kept by the power of God, *Amos ix. 15.*

Lastly, He concludes his prophecy of the Jews rejection, just as St Paul concludes his discourse on the same subject, when it began to be fulfilled, *Rom. xi. 33.* *How unsearchable are Gods judgments, and his ways past finding out!* So here, *ver. 29.* *Secret things belong to the Lord our God.* Some make it to be one sentence, *The secret things of the Lord our God are revealed to us and to our children*, as far as we are concerned to know them, and *he had not dealt so with other nations*: But we make it two sentences, by which,

1. We are forbidden curiously to enquire into the secret counsels of God, and to determine concerning them. A full answer is given to that question, *wherefore has the Lord done thus to this land?* sufficient to justify God and admonish us: But if any ask farther why God would be at such a vast expence of miracles to form such a people, whose apostasy and ruin he plainly foresaw? Why he did not by his almighty grace prevent it? Or, what he intends yet to do with them? Let such know that these are questions which cannot be answered, and therefore are not fit to be asked. It is presumption in us to pry into the *Arcana Imperii*, and to enquire into the reasons of state which *it is not for us to know*, See *Acts i. 7.* and *Joh. xxi. 22.* *Col. ii. 18.*

2. We are directed and encouraged diligently to enquire into that which God has made known; things *revealed belong to us and to our children.* Note, 1. Tho' God has kept much of his counsel secret, yet there is enough revealed to satisfy and save us. He has *kept back nothing that is profitable for us*, but that only which it is good for us to be ignorant of. 2. We ought to acquaint ourselves, and our children too, with the things of God that are revealed, we are not only allowed to search into them, but are concerned to do so, they are things in which we and ours are nearly interested: They are the rules we are to live by; the grants we are to live upon; and therefore we are to learn them diligently ourselves, and to teach them diligently to our children. 3. All our knowledge must be in order to practice, for this is the end of all divine revelation, not to furnish us with curious subjects of speculation and discourse, with which to entertain ourselves and our friends, *but that we may do all the words of this law*, and be blessed in our deed.

C H A P. XXX.

One would have thought the threatnings in the close of the foregoing chapter had made a full end of the people of Israel, and had left their case for ever desperate; but, in this chapter, we have a plain intimation of the mercy God had in store for them in the latter days, so that mercy at length rejoiceth against judgment, and has the last word. Here we have, 1. *Exceeding great and precious promises made to them upon their repentance and return to God*, *ver. 1—10.* 2. *The righteousness of faith set before them in the plainness and easiness of the commandment, that was now given them*, *ver. 11—14.* 3. *A fair reference of the whole matter to their choice*, *ver. 15—20.*

1. **A**ND it shall come to pass when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee, 2. And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice, according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul: 3. That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee. 4. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy

thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee. 5. And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it: and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. 6. And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. 7. And the LORD thy God, will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee. 8. And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the LORD, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day. 9. And the LORD thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for the LORD will again rejoyce over thee for good, as he rejoyced over thy fathers: 10. If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God to keep his commandments, and his statutes, *which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the LORD thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul.*

Two ways these verses may be considered; either as a conditional promise, or as an absolute prediction.

1. They are chiefly to be considered as a conditional promise, and so they belong to all persons and all people, and not to Israel only; and the design of them is to assure us, that the greatest sinners if they repent and be converted shall have their sins pardoned, and be restored to God's favour. This is the purport of the covenant of grace, it leaves room for repentance in case of misdemeanour, and promiseth pardon upon repentance, which the covenant of innocency did not. Now observe here,

1. How the repentance is described, which is the condition of these promises. 1. It begins in *serious consideration*, ver. 1. thou shalt call to mind, that which thou hadst forgotten, or not regarded. Note, Consideration is the first step towards conversion, *Isa. xlii. 3. Bring to mind, O ye transgressors.* The prodigal son came to himself first, and then to his father. That which they should call to mind is the blessing and the curse. If sinners would but seriously consider the happiness they have lost by sin, and the misery they have brought themselves into, and that by repentance they may escape that misery, and recover that happiness, they would not delay to return to the Lord their God. The prodigal called to mind the blessing and the curse, when he considered his present poverty, and the plenty of bread in his father's house, *Luk. xv. 17.* 2. It consists in sincere conversion. The effect of the consideration cannot but be godly sorrow and shame, *Ezek. vi. 9.—vii. 16.* But that which is the life and soul of repentance, and without which the most passionate expressions are but a jest, is *returning to the Lord our God*, ver. 2. If thou turn (ver. 10.) *with all thy heart, and with all thy soul.* We must return to our allegiance to God as our lord and ruler, our dependence upon him as our father and benefactor, our devotedness to him as our highest end, and our communion with him as our God in covenant. We must return to God from all that which stands in opposition to him, or competition with him. In this return to God we must be upright, with the heart and soul, and universal, with all the heart, and all the soul. 3. It is evidenced by a constant obedience to the holy will of God. If thou shalt obey his voice, ver. 2. *thou and thy children*, for it is not enough that we do our duty our selves, but we must train up and engage our children to it. Or, this comes in as the condition of the entail of the blessing upon their children, provided their children kept close to their duty. This obedience must be with an eye to God, thou shalt obey his voice, ver. 8. and hearken to that, ver. 10. It must be sincere and cheerful, and that entire, *with all thy heart, and with all thy soul*, ver. 2. It must be from a principle of love, and that love too must be *with all thy heart, and with all thy soul*, ver. 6. It is the heart and soul that God looks at, and requires; he will have that or nothing, and entire, or not at all. And it must be universal; according to all that I command thee, ver. 2, and again, ver. 8. *to do all his commandments.* For he that allows himself in the breach of one commandment involves himself in the guilt of contemning them all, *Jam. ii. 10.* An upright heart has respect to all Gods commands, *Psal. cxix. 6.*

2. What the favour is which is promised upon this repentance. Tho' they are brought to God by their trouble and distress, in the nations whither they were driven, ver. 1. yet God will graciously accept of them notwithstanding; for on this errand afflictions are sent, to bring us to repentance. Tho' they are driven out to the utmost parts of heaven, yet from thence their penitent prayers shall reach God's gracious ear, and there his favour shall find them out, ver. 4. *Undique ad coelos tantundem est via.* This promise Nehemiah pleads in his prayer for dispersed Israel, *Neh. i. 9.*

It is here promised, 1. That God would have compassion upon them, as proper objects of his pity, ver. 3. Against sinners that

go on in sin, God has indignation, *chap. xxix. 20.* but on those that repent and bemoan themselves, he has compassion, *Jer. xxxi. 18, 20.* True penitents may take great encouragement from the compassions, and tender mercies of our God, which never fail, but overflow. 2. That he would turn their captivity, and gather them from the nations whither they were scattered, ver. 3. tho' never so remote, ver. 4. One of the Chaldee paraphrasts applies this to the Messiah, explaining it thus, *the word of the Lord shall gather you by the hand of Elias the great priest; and shall bring you by the hand of the king Messiah; for this was God's covenant with him, that he should restore the preserved of Israel, Isa. xlix. 6.* And this the design of his death, to gather into one the children of God that were scattered abroad, *Joh. xi. 51, 52.* To him shall the gathering of the people be. 3. That he would bring them into their land again, ver. 5. Note, Penitent sinners are not only delivered out of their misery, but restored to true happiness in the favour of God. The land they are brought into to possess it, is, tho' not the same, yet in some respects better than that which our first father Adam possessed, and out of which he was expelled. 4. That he would do them good, ver. 5. and rejoyce over them for good, ver. 9. For there is joy in heaven upon the repentance and conversion of sinners: the father of the prodigal rejoyced over him for good. That he would multiply them, ver. 5. And that when they grew numerous, every mouth might have meat, he would make them plenteous in every work of their hand, ver. 9. National repentance and reformation, bring national plenty, peace, and prosperity. It is promised, *the Lord will make thee plenteous in the fruit of thy cattle and land, for good.* Many have plenty for hurt, the prosperity of fools destroys them. Then it is for good, when with it God gives us grace to use it for his glory. 5. That he would transfer the curses they had been under to their enemies, ver. 7. When God was gathering them in to re-establish them, they would meet with much opposition; but the same curses that had been a burthen upon them, should become a defence to them, by being turned upon their adversaries. The cup of trembling should be taken out of their hand, and put into the hand of those that afflicted them, *Isa. li. 22, 23.* 6. That he would give them his grace to change their hearts and rule there, ver. 6. *The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, to love the Lord.* Note, (1.) The heart must be circumcised to love God. The filth of the flesh must be put away; and the foolishness of the heart, as the Chaldee paraphrase expounds it. See *Col. ii. 11, 12.* *Rom. ii. 29.* Circumcision was a seal of the covenant; the heart is then circumcised to love God, when it is strongly engaged and held by that bond to this duty. (2.) It is the work of God's grace to circumcise the heart, and to shed abroad the love of God there; and this grace is given to all that repent, and seek it carefully. Nay, that seems to be rather a promise than a precept, ver. 8. *Thou shalt return, and obey the voice of the Lord.* He that requires us to return, promiseth grace to enable us to return; and it is our fault if that grace be not effectual. Herein the covenant of grace is well ordered, that whatsoever is required in the covenant is promised. Turn ye at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit, *Prov. i. 23.* Lastly, it is observable, how Moses here calls God, the Lord thy God, twelve times in these ten verses; intimating, 1. That penitents may take direction and encouragement in their return to God, from their relation to him, *Jer. iii. 22. Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God; therefore to thee we are bound to come, whither else should we go? And therefore we hope to find favour with thee.* 2. That those that have revolted from God, if they return to him, and do their first works, shall be restored to their former state of honour and happiness. Bring hither the first robe. In the threatnings of the former chapter, he is all along called the Lord, a God of power, and the judge of all: but in the promises of this chapter the Lord thy God, a God of grace, and in covenant with thee.

2. This may also be considered as a prediction of the repentance and restoration of the Jews, *When all these things are come upon thee*, ver. 1. The blessing first, and after that the curse, then the mercy in reserve shall take place. Tho' their hearts were wretchedly hardened, yet the grace of God could soften and change them; and then, tho' their case was deplorably miserable, the providence of God would redress all their grievances. Now, 1. It is certain, this was fulfilled in their return from their captivity in Babylon. It was a wonderful instance of their repentance and reformation, that Ephraim, who had been joined to idols, renounced them, and said, *What have I to do any more with idols?* That captivity effectually cured them of idolatry; and then God planted them again in their own land, and did them good. But, 2. Some think it is yet further to be accomplished in the conversion of the Jews that are now dispersed, their repentance for the sin of their fathers in crucifying Christ, their return to God through him, and their accession to the Christian church. But, alas, who shall live when God doth this?

11. ¶ For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. 12. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may

may hear it and do it? 13. Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? 14. But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

Moses here urges them to obedience, from the consideration of the plainness and easiness of the command.

1. This is true of the law of Moses. They could never plead in excuse of their disobedience, that God had enjoined them that which was either *unintelligible*, or *impracticable*, impossible to be known, or to be done, *ver. 11. It is not hidden from thee*. That is, (1.) It is not too high for thee; thou needest not send messengers to heaven, *ver. 12. to enquire what thou must do to please God*; nor needest thou go *beyond sea*, *ver. 12. as the philosophers did, that travelled through many and distant regions in pursuit of learning*; no; thou art not put to that labour and expence; nor is the commandment within the reach of those only that have a great estate, or a refined genius, but it is *very nigh unto thee*, *ver. 14. It is written in your books, made plain upon tables, so that he that runs may read it*; your priests keep this knowledge, and when any difficulty ariseth, you may *ask the law at their mouth*, *Mal. ii. 7. It is not communicated in a strange language*; but it is in thy mouth, *i. e. in the vulgar tongue that is commonly used among you, in which you may hear it read, and talk of it familiarly among your children*. It is not wrapped up in obscure phrases or figures to puzzle and amuse you, or in hieroglyphicks, but it is in thy heart; it is delivered in such a manner, as that it is level to thy capacity, even to the capacity of the meanest. (2.) It is not too hard nor heavy for thee: so the Septuagint reads it, *ver. 11. Thou needest not say, as good attempt to climb to heaven, or flee upon the wings of the morning to the uttermost part of the sea, as go about to do all the words of this law*: no, the matter is not so; it is no such intolerable yoke as some ill-minded people represent it. It was indeed a heavy yoke in comparison with that of Christ, *Acts xv. 10. but not in comparison with the idolatrous service of the neighbour nations*. God appeals to themselves, that he had not *made them to serve with an offering, nor wearied them with incense*. *Isa. xliii. 20. Mic. vi. 3. But he speaks especially of the moral law, and the precepts of that, that is very nigh thee, consonant to the law of nature, which would have been found in every man's heart, and every man's mouth, if he would but have attended to it*. There is that in thee which *consents to the law that it is good*, *Rom. vii. 16. Thou hast therefore no reason to complain of any insuperable difficulty in the observance of it*.

2. This is true of the gospel of Christ to which the apostle applies it, and makes it the language of the *righteousness which is of faith*, *Rom. x. 6, 7, 8. And many think, that is principally intended by Moses here; for he wrote of Christ, Joh. v. 46. This is God's commandment, now under the gospel, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, 1 Joh. iii. 23. If we ask as the blind man did Lord, who is he? Or where is he, that we may believe on him? Joh. ix. 36. this scripture gives an answer, we need not go up to heaven, to fetch him thence, for he is come down from thence in his incarnation; nor down to the deep, to fetch him thence, for thence he is come up in his resurrection. But the word is nigh us, and Christ in that word; so that if we believe with the heart, that the promises of the incarnation and resurrection of the Messiah, are fulfilled in our Lord Jesus, and receive him accordingly, and confess him with our mouth, we have then Christ with us, and we shall be saved. He is near, very near, that justifies us. The law was plain and easy, but the gospel much more so.*

15. ¶ See I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil: 16. In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. 17. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them: 18. I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land whither thou passest over Jordan, to go to possess it. 19. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: 20. That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him (for he is thy life, and the length of thy days) that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

Moses here concludes with a very bright light, and a very strong fire, that, if possible, what he had been preaching of might find entrance into the understanding and affections of this unthinking people. What could be said more moving, and more likely to make deep and lasting impressions? the manner of his treating with them is so rational, so prudent, so affectionate, and every way so apt to gain the point, that it abundantly shews him to be in earnest, and leaves them inexcusable in their disobedience.

1. He states the case very fairly. He appeals to themselves concerning it, whether he had not laid the matter as plain as they could wish before them. (1.) Every man covets to obtain life and good, and to escape death and evil; desires happiness, and dreads misery: well, saith he, I have shewed you the way to obtain all the happiness you can desire, and to avoid all misery. Be obedient, and all shall be well, and nothing amiss. Our first parents eat the forbidden fruit in hopes of getting thereby the knowledge of good and evil; but it was a miserable knowledge they got of good by the loss of it, and of evil by the sense of it; yet such is the compassion of God toward man, that instead of giving him up to his own delusion, he has favoured him by his word with such a knowledge of good and evil, as will make him for ever happy, if it be not his own fault. (2.) Every man is moved and governed in his actions by hope and fear, hope of good, and fear of evil, real or apparent. Now, saith Moses, I have tried both ways, if you will be either drawn to obedience by the certain prospect of advantage by it, or driven to obedience by the no less certain prospect of ruin, in case you be disobedient; if you will be wrought upon either way, you will be kept close to God and your duty; but if you are not, you are utterly inexcusable.

Let us then hear the conclusion of the whole matter: (1.) If they and theirs would love God and serve him, they should live and be happy, *ver. 16. If they would love God, and evidence the sincerity of their love by keeping his commandments*; if they would make conscience of *keeping his commandments*, and do it from a principle of love, then God would do them good, and they should be as happy as his love and blessing could make them. (2.) If they or theirs should at any time turn from God, desert his service, and worship other gods, that would certainly be their ruin, *ver. 17, 18. Observe, It is not for every failure in the particulars of their duty, that ruin is threatened, but for apostasy and idolatry: tho' every violation of the command deserved the curse, yet the nation would be destroyed by that only which is the violation of the marriage-covenant. The purport of the New Testament is much the same; that in like manner sets before us life and death; good and evil; He that believes shall be saved; he that believes not shall be damned, Mark xvi. 16. And that faith, includes love and obedience. To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality, God will give eternal life. But to them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, and so, in effect, worship other gods and serve them, to them will be rendered the indignation and wrath of an immortal God, the consequent of which must needs be the tribulation and anguish of an immortal soul, Rom. ii. 7, 8, 9.*

2. Having thus stated the case, he fairly puts them to their choice, with a direction to them to chuse well. He appeals to heaven and earth concerning his fair and faithful dealing with them, *ver. 19. They could not but own, that whatever was the issue, he had delivered his soul, therefore that they might deliver theirs, he bids them chuse life, i. e. chuse to do their duty, which would be their life. Note, 1. Those shall have life that chuse it: they that chuse the favour of God, and communion with him for their felicity, and prosecute their choice as they ought, shall have what they chuse. 2. Those that come short of life and happiness, must thank themselves; they had had it, if they had chosen it, when they were put to their choice: but they die because they will die, that is, because they do not like the life promised, upon the terms proposed.*

In the last verse, (1.) He shews them, in short, what their duty is, *to love God, and to love him as the Lord, a being most amiable, and as their God, a God in covenant with them, and as an evidence of this love, to obey his voice in every thing, and by a constancy in this love and obedience to cleave to him, and never to forsake him, in affection or practice. (2.) He shews them what reason there was for this duty. In consideration, 1. Of their dependence upon God; he is thy life, and the length of thy days. He gives life, preserves life, restores life, and prolongs it by his power, tho' it be a frail life; and by his patience, tho' it be a forfeited life: he sweetens life with his comforts, and is the sovereign lord of life; in his hand our breath is. Therefore we are concerned to keep ourselves in his love; for it is good having him our friend, and bad having him our enemy. 2. Of their obligation to him for the promise of Canaan made to their fathers, and ratified with an oath. And, 3. Of their expectation from him in performance of that promise, Love God and serve him, that thou mayest dwell in that land of promise, which thou mayest be sure he can give, and uphold to thee, who is thy life, and the length of thy days. All these are arguments to us to continue in love and obedience to the God of our mercies.*

C H A P. XXXI.

In this chapter Moses having finished his sermon, (1.) Encourageth both the people, who were now to enter Canaan, ver. 1—6. and Joshua, who was to lead them, ver. 7, 8, 23. And (2.) He takes care for the keeping of these things always in their remembrance, after his decease. 1. By the book of the law which was 1. Written; 2. Delivered into the custody of the priests, ver. 9. and 24—27. 3. Ordered to be publicly read every seventh year, ver. 10—13. 2. By a song which God orders Moses to prepare for their instruction and admonition. 1. He calls Moses and Joshua to the door of the tabernacle, ver. 14, 15. He foretels to them the apostasy of Israel in process of time, and the judgments they would thereby bring upon themselves, ver. 16—18. 3. He prescribes the following song to be a witness against them, ver. 19—21. 4. Moses wrote it, ver. 22. And delivered it to Israel, with an intimation of the design of it, as he had received it from the Lord, ver. 28—30.

1. **A**ND Moses went and spake these words unto all Israel. 2. And he said unto them, I am an hundred and twenty years old this day; I can no more go out and come in: also the LORD hath said unto me, Thou shalt not go over this Jordan. 3. The LORD thy God, he will go over before thee, and he will destroy these nations from before thee, and thou shalt possess them: and Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the LORD hath said. 4. And the LORD shall do unto them, as he did to Sihon, and to Og, kings of the Amorites, and unto the land of them, whom he destroyed. 5. And the LORD shall give them up before your face, that ye may do unto them according unto all the commandments which I have commanded you. 6. Be strong and of a good courage, fear not nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee, he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. 7. ¶ And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the fight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. 8. And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee, he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not neither be dismayed.

Loth to part (we say) bids oft farewell; Moses doth so to the children of Israel; not because he was loth to go to God, but because he was loth to leave them, fearing, that when he had left them, they would leave God: he had finished what he had to say to them by way of counsel and exhortation: here he calls them together to give them a word of encouragement, especially with reference to the wars of Canaan, they were now to engage in. It was a discouragement to them that Moses was to be removed, at a time when he could so ill be spared: tho' Joshua was continued to fight for them in the valley, they would want Moses to intercede for them on the hill, as he did, *Exod.* xvii. 10. But there is no remedy; *Moses can no more go out, and come in*, ver. 2. Not that he was disabled by any decay either of body or mind; for his *natural force was not abated*, chap. xxxiv. 7. But he cannot any longer discharge his office: for, 1. He is an *hundred and twenty years old*, and it is time for him to think of resigning his honour, and returning to his rest. He that had arrived to so great an age then, when seventy or eighty was the ordinary stint, as appears by the prayer of Moses, *Psal.* xc. 10. might well think, he had accomplished as a hireling his day. 2. He is under a divine sentence, *thou shalt not go over Jordan*. Thus a full stop was put to his usefulness; hitherto he must go, hitherto he must serve, but no further. So God had appointed it, and Moses acquiesceth: for I know not why we should any of us desire to live a day longer than while God has work for us to do; nor shall we be accountable for more time than is allotted us. But tho' Moses must not go over himself, he is in care to encourage those that must.

1. He encourageth the people; and never could any general animate his soldiers upon such good grounds, as Moses here encourageth Israel. 1. He assures them of the constant presence of God with them, ver. 3. *The Lord thy God* that has led thee and kept thee hitherto, *he will go over before thee*; and they might follow boldly, who were sure that they had God for their leader. He repeats it again, ver. 6. with an emphasis, *the Lord thy God*, the great Jehovah, who is thine in covenant, *he it is*, he, and no less; he, and no other, *that goes before thee*; not only that by his promise has assured thee that *he will go before thee*; but by his ark, the visible token of his presence, shews thee that he doth actually *go before thee*. And he repeats it with enlargement, not only he goes over before thee at first,

to set thee in, but he will continue with thee all along, with thee and thine, *he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee*; he will not disappoint thy expectations in any strait, nor will he ever desert thine interest. Be constant to him, and he will be so to thee, this is applied by the apostle, to all God's spiritual Israel, for the encouragement of their faith and hope; unto us is this gospel preached, as well as unto them, *he will never fail thee nor forsake thee*, Heb. xiii. 5. 2. He commends Joshua to them for a leader; *Joshua, he shall go over before thee*, ver. 3. One whose conduct and courage, and sincere affection to their interest, they had had long experience of; and one whom God had ordained and appointed to be their leader, and therefore no doubt, would own and bless, and make a blessing to them. See *Numb.* xxvii. 18. Note, It is a great encouragement to a people, when instead of some useful instruments that are removed God raiseth up others to carry on his work. 3. He ensures their success. The greatest generals, supported with the greatest advantages, must yet own the issues of war to be doubtful, and uncertain; the battle is not always to the strong, or to the bold; an ill accident unthought of, may turn the scale against the highest hopes. But Moses had warrant from God to assure Israel, that, notwithstanding the disadvantages they laboured under, they should certainly be victorious. A coward will fight, when he is sure to be a conqueror. God undertakes to do the work, *he will destroy these nations*; and Israel shall do little else but divide the spoil, *thou shalt possess them*, ver. 3. Two things might encourage their hopes of this. (1.) The victories they had already obtained over Sihon and Og, ver. 4. From which they might infer both the power of God, that he could do what he had done, and the purpose of God, that he would finish what he had begun to do. Thus must we improve our experience. (2.) The command God had given them to destroy the Canaanites, chap. vii. 2.—xii. 2. to which he refers here, ver. 5. That ye may do unto them according to all which I have commanded you, and from which they might infer if God had commanded them to destroy the Canaanites, no doubt, he would put it into the power of their hands to do it. Note, What God has made our duty, we have reason to expect opportunity and assistance from him for the doing of it. So that from all this he had reason enough to bid them *be strong, and of a good courage*, ver. 6. While they had the power of God engaged for them, they had no reason to fear all the powers of Canaan engaged against them.

2. He encourageth Joshua, ver. 7, 8. Observe, 1. Tho' Joshua was an experienced general, and a man of approved gallantry and resolution, and that had already signalized himself in many brave actions; yet Moses saw cause to bid him *be of good courage*, now he was entering upon new action; and Joshua was far from taking it as an affront, or as an implicit questioning of his courage to be thus charged, as sometimes we find proud and peevish spirits invidiously taking exhortations and admonitions for reproaches and reflections. Joshua himself is very well pleased to be admonished by Moses to be strong, and of good courage. 2. He gives him this charge *in the sight of all Israel*, that they might be the more observant of him, whom they saw thus solemnly inaugurated, and that he might set himself the more to be an example of courage to the people, who were witnesses to this charge here given to him, as well as to themselves. 3. He gives him the same assurances of the divine presence, and consequently of a glorious success that he had given the people. God would be with him, would not forsake him, and therefore he should certainly accomplish that glorious enterprize to which he was called and commissioned, *thou shalt cause them to inherit the land of promise*. Note, Those shall speed well that have God with them; and therefore they ought to *be of good courage*. Through God let us do valiantly, for through him we shall do victoriously; if we resist the devil he shall flee, and God shall *shortly tread him under our feet*.

9. ¶ And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and unto all the elders of Israel. 10. And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, 11. When all Israel is come to appear before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose: thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. 12. Gather the people together, men, and women and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: 13. And that their children which have not known any thing, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.

The law was given by Moses; so it is said, *Joh.* i. 17. He was not only intrusted to deliver it to that generation, but to transmit it to the generations to come; and here it appears that he was faithful to that trust.

1. *Moses wrote this law*, ver. 9. The learned bishop Patrick understands this of all the five books of Moses, which are often called the law; tho' he supposeth that Moses had written most of the pentateuch before, yet he did not finish it till now; now he put his last hand to that sacred volume. Many think, that the law here (especially since it is called this law, this grand abridgement of the law) is to be understood of this book of Deuteronomy; all those discourses to the people, which have taken up this whole book, he being in them divinely inspired, wrote them as the word of God. He wrote this law, (1.) That they that had heard it might often review it themselves, and call it to mind. (2.) That it might be the more safely handed down to posterity. Note, The church has received abundance of advantage by the writing as well as by the preaching of divine things; faith comes, not only by hearing, but by reading. The same care that was taken of the law, thanks be to God, is taken of the gospel too: soon after it was preached it was written, that it might reach to them on whom the ends of the world shall come.

2. Having written it he committed it to the care and custody of the priests, and elders. He delivered one authentick copy to the priests, to be laid up by the ark; ver. 26. there to remain as a standard by which all other copies must be tried: And it is supposed to the elders of each tribe he gave another copy, to be transcribed by all that were so disposed of that tribe. Some observe that the the elders as well as the priests, were intrusted with the law, to intimate, that magistrates by their power, as well as ministers by their doctrine, are to maintain religion, and to take care that the law be not broken or lost.

3. He appointed the publick reading of this law in a general assembly of all Israel every seventh year. The pious Jews (it is very likely) read the law daily in their families, and *Moses of old time was read in the synagogues every sabbath-day*, Acts xv. 21. But once in seven years, that the law might be the more magnified, and made honourable, it must be read in a general assembly. Tho' we read the word in private, we must not think it needless to hear it read in publick.

Now here he gives direction,

1. When this solemn reading of the law must be; that the time might add to the solemnity, it must be done (1.) In the year of release. In that year the land rested, so that they could the better spare time to attend this service. Servants who were then discharged, and poor debtors who were then acquitted from their debts, must know, that having the benefit of the law, it was justly expected they should yield obedience to it; and therefore give up themselves to be God's servants, because he had loosed their bonds. The year of release, was typical of gospel grace, which therefore is called the *acceptable year of the Lord*; for our remission and liberty by Christ, engageth us to keep his commandments, Luke i. 74, 75. (2.) At the feast of tabernacles in that year. In that feast they were particularly required to *rejoyce before God*, Lev. xxiii. 40. Therefore then they must read the law, both to qualify their mirth, and keep it in due bounds, and to sanctify their mirth, that they might make the law of God the matter of their rejoycing; and might read it with pleasure, and not as a task.

2. To whom it must be read; to *all Israel*, ver. 11. *men, women, and children, and the strangers*, ver. 12. The women and children were not obliged to go up to the other feasts, but to this only in which the law was read. Note, It is the will of God that all people should acquaint themselves with his word. It is a rule to all; and therefore should be read to all. It is supposed that since all Israel could not possibly meet in one place, or that one man's voice could reach them all, that as many as the courts of the Lord's house would hold met there, and the rest at the same time in their synagogues. The Jewish doctors say, that the hearers were bound to *prepare their hearts*, and to hear with *fear and reverence, and with joy and trembling*, as in the day when the law was given on mount Sinai; and tho' they were *great and wise men, which knew the whole law very well*, yet they were bound to hear with great attention; for he that reads is the messenger of the congregation to cause the words of God to be heard. I wish those that hear the gospel read and preached, would consider this.

3. By whom it must be read. *Thou shalt read it*, ver. 11. *thou, O Israel*, by a proper person appointed for that purpose, *thou, O Joshua*, their chief ruler; accordingly we find he read the law himself, *Josh. viii. 35*. So did Josiah, *2 Chron. xxiv. 30*. and Ezra, *Neh. viii. 3*. And the Jews say, that the king himself, (when they had one) was the person that read the law in the courts of the temple; that a pulpit was set up for that purpose in the midst of the court, in which the king stood, that the book of the law was delivered him by the high-priest, he stood to receive it, uttered a prayer (as every one did that was to read the law in publick) before he read; and then, if he pleased, might sit down and read. But if he read standing, it was thought the more commendable, as (they say) king Agrippa did. Here we offer it as a conjecture, that Solomon is called the preacher, his Ecclesiastes, because he delivered the substance of that book in a discourse to the people after his publick reading of the law in the feast of tabernacles according to this appointment here.

4. For what end it must be thus solemnly read, (1.) That the present generation might hereby keep up their acquaintance with the law of God, ver. 12. They must hear, that they may learn; and *fear God; and observe to do their duty*. See here what we are to aim at in hearing the word; we must hear that we may learn, and grow in knowledge, and every time we read the scriptures, we shall find there is still more and more to be learned out of them. We must learn, that we may fear God *i. e.* that we may be duly affected with divine things; and must fear God, that we may *observe and do the words of his law*, for in vain do we pretend to fear him, if we do not obey him. (2.) That the rising generation might betimes be leavened with religion, ver. 13. not only that those who know something may thus know more; but that *the children which have not known any thing* may betime know this, how much it is their interest as well as duty to fear God.

14. ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thy days approach that thou must die: call Joshua, and present your selves in the tabernacle of the congregation, that I may give him a charge. And Moses and Joshua went, and presented themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation. 15. And the LORD appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of a cloud: and the pillar of the cloud stood over the door of the tabernacle. 16. ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land whither they go to be amongst them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them. 17. Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them, so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not amongst us? 18. And I will surely hide my face in that day, for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods. 19. Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel. 20. For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swore unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and hony; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant. 21. And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this song shall testify against them as a witness: for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed: for I know their imagination which they go about, even now before I have brought them into the land which I swore.

Here, 1. Moses and Joshua are summoned to attend the divine majesty at the door of the tabernacle, ver. 14. Moses is told again that he must shortly die; even those that are most ready and willing to die have need to be often minded of its approach. In consideration of this he must come himself to meet God, for whatever improves our communion with God furthers our preparation for death. He must also bring Joshua with him to be presented to God for a successor, and to receive his commission and charge. Moses readily obeys the summons, for he was none of those that look with an evil eye upon their successors, but, on the contrary, rejoiced in him.

2. God graciously gives them the meeting. *He appeared in the tabernacle*, (as the Shechinah used to appear) *in a pillar of cloud*, ver. 15. This is the only time in all this book that we find the glory of God appearing, as it oft did in the three foregoing books: which perhaps signifies that in the latter days under the evangelical law, such visible appearances as these of the divine glory are not to be expected, but we must take heed to the more sure word of prophecy.

3. He tells Moses, that after his death the covenant which he had taken so much pains to make between Israel and their God would certainly be broken. (1.) That Israel would *forsake God*, ver. 16. And we may be sure if the covenant between God and men be broken; the blame must lie on man, it is he that breaks it; we have often observed it, That God never leaves any till they first leave him. Worshipping the gods of the Canaanites, (who had been the natives, but from henceforwards were to be looked upon as the strangers of that land) would undoubtedly be counted a deserting of God, and like adultery, a violation of the covenant. Thus still those are revolvers from Christ, and will be so adjudged, who either make a god of their money by reigning covetousness, or a god of their belly by reigning sensuality. They that *turn to other gods*, ver. 18. forsake their own mercies. This

This apostasy of theirs is foretold to be an effect of their prosperity, *ver. 20. They shall have eaten and filled themselves*, that is all they will aim at in eating, to gratify their own appetites, and then they will wax fat, grow secure and sensual; their security will take off their dread of God and his judgments; and their sensuality will incline them to the idolatries of the Heathen, which *made provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts of it*. Note, God has a clear and infallible foresight of all the wickedness of the wicked, and hath often covenanted with those, who *he knew would deal very treacherously*, Isa. xlviii. 8. and conferred many favours on those, who he knew would deal very ungratefully.

(2.) That then God would forsake Israel; and justly doth he cast them off who had so unjustly cast him off, *ver. 17. My anger shall be kindled against them, and I will forsake them*. His providence would forsake them, no longer to protect and prosper them, and then they would become a prey to all their neighbours; his spirit and grace would forsake them, no longer to teach and guide them, and then they would be more and more bigotted, befotted, and hardened in their idolatries. Thus, *many evils and troubles would befall them*, *ver. 17, 21.* which would be such manifest indications of God's displeasure against them, that they themselves would be constrained to own it, *Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us?* They that have sinned away their God, will find that thereby they pull all mischiefs upon their own heads. But that which compleated their misery was, that God would *hide his face from them in that day*, that day of their trouble and distress, *ver. 18.* Whatever outward troubles we are in, if we have but the light of God's countenance, we may be easy. But if God hide his face from us and our prayers, we are undone.

4. He directs Moses to deliver them a song, in the composing of which he should be divinely inspired, and which should remain a standing testimony for God as faithful to them in giving them warning, and against them as false to themselves in not taking the warning, *ver. 19.* The written word in general, as well as this song in particular, is a witness for God, against all those that break covenant with him. *It shall be for a testimony*, Mat. xxiv. 14. The wisdom of man has devised many ways of conveying the knowledge of good and evil, by laws, histories, prophecies, proverbs, and, amongst the rest, by songs; each have their advantages. And the wisdom of God has in the scripture made use of them all, that ignorant and careless men might be left inexcusable. (1.) This song, if rightly improved, might be a means to prevent their apostasy, for in the inditing of it, God had an eye to their present imagination, now, *before they were brought into the land of promise*, *ver. 21.* God knew very well that there were in their hearts such gross conceits of the deity, and such inclinations to idolatry, that they would be tinder to the sparks of that temptation, and therefore in this song gives them warning of their danger that way. Note, The word of God is a *discerner of the thoughts and intents of mens hearts*, and meets with them strangely, by its reproofs and corrections, *Heb. iv. 12.* Compare *1 Cor. xiv. 25.* Ministers who preach the word know not the imaginations men go about, but God, whose word it is, knows very well. (2.) If this song did not prevent their apostasy, yet it might help to bring them to repentance, and to reduce them from their apostasy. When their troubles are come upon them this *song shall not be forgotten*, but may serve as a glass to shew them their own faces, that they may humble themselves, and return to him from whom they have revolted. Note, Those whom God has mercy in store for, he may leave them to fall, yet he will provide means for their recovery. Medicines are prepared beforehand for their cure.

22. ¶ Moses therefore wrote this song the same day, and taught it the children of Israel. 23. And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swore unto them: and I will be with thee. 24. ¶ And it came to pass when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished; 25. That Moses commanded the Levites which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, 26. Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee. 27. For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the LORD; and how much more after my death? 28. Gather unto me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears, and call heaven and earth to record against them. 29. For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt *your selves*, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you: and evil will befall you in the latter days, because ye will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands. 30. And Moses

spoke in the ears of all the congregation of Israel the words of this song, until they were ended.

Here, 1. The charge is given to Joshua, which God had said, *ver. 14.* he would give him. The same in effect that Moses had given him, *ver. 7. Be strong and of a good courage*, *ver. 23.* Joshua had now heard from God so much of the wickedness of the people whom he was to have the conduct of, as could not but be a discouragement to him; nay, faith God, how bad soever they are, thou shalt go through thy undertaking, for *I will be with thee*. Thou shalt put them into possession of Canaan, if they afterwards by their sin throw themselves out of it again, that will be no fault of thine, nor any dishonour to thee, therefore *be of good courage*.

2. The solemn delivery of the book of the law to the Levites to be deposited in the side of the ark is here again related, *ver. 24, 25, 26.* of which before, *ver. 9.* Only they are here directed where to treasure up this precious original, not in the ark, there only the two tables were preserved, but in another box *by the side of the ark*. It is probable, this was the very book that was found in the house of the Lord, (having been somehow or other misplaced) in the days of Josiah, *2 Chron. xxxiv. 14.* and so perhaps the following words here, *that it may be a witness against thee*, may particularly point at that event which happened so long after; for the finding of this very book occasioned the publick reading of it by Josiah himself, for a witness against a people who were then almost ripe for their ruin by the Babylonians.

3. The song which follows in the next chapter is here delivered to Moses, and by him to the people. He wrote it, first, *ver. 22.* as the Spirit of God indited it, and then *spoke it in the ears of all the congregation*, *ver. 30.* and taught it them, *ver. 22. i. e.* gave out copies of it, and ordered the people to learn it by heart.

It was delivered by word of mouth first, and afterwards in writing to the elders and officers, as the representatives of their respective tribes, *ver. 28.* by them to be transmitted to their several families and households. It is delivered to them with a solemn appeal to heaven and earth, concerning the fair warning which was given them by it of the fatal consequences of their apostasy from God; and with a declaration of the little joy and little hope, Moses had in and concerning them.

1. He declares what little joy he had had of them while he was with them, *ver. 27.* It is not in a passion that he saith, *I know thy rebellion*, (as once he said it unadvisedly, *Hear now, ye rebels*) but it is the result of a long acquaintance with them, *ye have been rebellious against the Lord*. Their rebellions against himself he makes no mention of, those he had long since forgiven and forgotten: but their rebellions against God, they must be made to hear of, that they may be ever repented of, and never repeated.

2. What little hopes he had of them now he was leaving them. From what God had now said to him, *ver. 16.* more than from his own experience of them, tho' that was discouraging enough, he tells them, *ver. 29. I know that after my death you will utterly corrupt your selves*. Many a sad thought, no doubt, it occasioned to this good man to foresee the apostasy and ruin of a people he had taken so much pains with to do them good, and make them happy; but this was his comfort, that he had done his duty, and that God would be glorified, if not in their settlement, in their dispersion. Thus our Lord Jesus a little before his death foretold the rise of false christs and false prophets, *Mat. xxiv. 24.* notwithstanding which, and all the apostasies of the later times, we may be confident that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church, for the foundation of God stands sure*.

CHAP. XXXII.

In this chapter we have, 1. The song which Moses, by the appointment of God, delivered to the children of Israel, for a standing admonition to them, to take heed of forsaking God. This takes up most of the chapter. In which we have, (1.) The preface, *ver. 1, 2.* (2.) A high character of God, and in opposition to that an ill character of the people of Israel, *ver. 3—6.* (3.) A rehearsal of the great things God had done for them, and, in opposition to that, an account of their ill carriage towards him, *ver. 7—18.* (4.) A prediction of the wasting destroying judgments which God would bring upon them for their sins, in which God is here justified, by the many aggravations of their impieties, *ver. 19—33.* (5.) A promise of the destruction of their enemies and oppressors at last, and the glorious deliverance of a remnant of Israel, *ver. 33—43.* 2. The exhortation with which Moses delivered this song to them, *ver. 44—47.* 3. The orders God gives to Moses to go up to mount Nebo and die, *ver. 48—52.*

1. **G**IVE ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak: and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. 2. My doctrine shall drop as the rain: my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass. 3. Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. 4. He is the rock, his work is perfect; for all his

his ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he. 5. They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation. 6. Do ye thus requite the LORD, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?

Here is, 1. A commanding preface or introduction to this song of Moses, ver. 1, 2. He begins (1.) with a solemn appeal to heaven and earth concerning the truth and importance of what he was about to say, and the justice of the divine proceedings against a rebellious and backsliding people, for he had said, chap. xxxi. 28. that he would in this song call heaven and earth to record against them. The heaven and earth themselves would sooner hear than this perverse and unthinking people, for they revolt not from their obedience to their Creator, but continue to this day, according to his ordinance, as his servants, Psal. cxix. 90, 91. and therefore will rise up in judgment against rebellious Israel. Heaven and earth will be witness against sinners, witnesses of the warning given them, and of their refusal to take the warning; see Job xx. 27. the heaven shall reveal his iniquity, and the earth shall rise up against him. Or heaven and earth are here put for the inhabitants of both, angels and men; both shall agree to justify God in his proceedings against Israel, and to declare his righteousness, Psal. l. 6. See Rev. xix. 1. (2.) He begins with a solemn application of what he was about to say to the people, ver. 2. My doctrine shall drop as the rain. (1.) It shall be a beating sweeping rain to the rebellious; so one of the Chaldee paraphrasts expounds the first clause. Rain is sometimes sent for judgment, witness that with which the world was deluged, and so the word of God, as to some it is reviving and refreshing, and a favour of life unto life, so to others it is terrifying and killing, and a favour of death unto death. (2.) It shall be as a sweet and comfortable dew to those who are rightly prepared to receive it. Observe, 1. The subject of this song is doctrine; he had given them a song of praise and thanksgiving, Exod. xv. but this is a song of instruction, for in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, we are not only to give glory to God, but to teach and admonish one another, Col. iii. 16. Hence many of David's psalms are intitled *Maschil*, to give instruction. 2. This doctrine is fitly compared to rain, and showers, which come from above, to make the earth fruitful, and accomplish that for which they are sent, Isa. lv. 10, 11. and depend not upon the wisdom or will of man, Mic. v. 7. It is a mercy to have this rain come oft upon us, and our duty to drink it in, Heb. vi. 7. 3. He promiseth that his doctrine shall drop, and distil as the dew, and the small rain, which descends silently and without noise. The word preached is then likely to profit, when it comes gently, and sweetly insinuates itself into the hearts and affections of the hearers. 4. He bespeaks their acceptance and entertainment of it, and that it might be as sweet and pleasant and welcome to them, as rain to the thirsty earth, Psal. lxxii. 6. And the word of God is then likely to do us good, when it is thus acceptable. 5. The learned bishop Patrick understands it as a prayer, that his words which were sent from heaven to them, might sink into their hearts, and soften them, as the rain doth the earth, and so make them fruitful in obedience.

2. An awful declaration of the greatness and righteousness of God, ver. 3, 4. He begins with this, and lays it down as his first principle, (1.) To preserve the honour of God, that no reproach might be cast upon him, for the sake of the wickedness of his people Israel: how wicked and corrupt soever they are who are called by his name; he is just and right and all that is good, and is not to be thought the worse of for their badness. (2.) To aggravate the wickedness of Israel who knew and worshipped such a holy God, and yet were themselves so unholy. And (3.) To justify God in his dealings with them; we must abide by it that God is righteous, even when his judgments are a great deep, Jer. xii. 1.

Moses here sets himself to publish the name of the Lord, ver. 3. that Israel knowing what a God he is whom they had avouched for theirs, might never be such fools as to exchange him for a false god, a dunghill god. He calls upon them therefore to ascribe greatness to him. It will be of great use to us for the preventing of sin, and the preserving of us in the way of our duty, always to keep up high and honourable thoughts of God, and to take all occasions to express them. Ascribe greatness to our God. We cannot add to his greatness, for it is infinite; but we must acknowledge it, and give him the glory of it.

Now, when Moses would set forth the greatness of God, he doth it not by explaining his eternity and immensity, or describing the brightness of his glory in the upper world, but by shewing the faithfulness of his word, the perfection of his works, and the wisdom and equity of all the administrations of his government; for in these his glory shines most clear to us, and these are the things revealed concerning him, which belong to us and our children, ver. 4. 1. He is the rock. So he is called six times in this chapter, and the LXX all along translate it *Θεός, God*. The learned Mr Hugh Broughton reckons, that God is called the rock eighteen times (besides in this chapter) in the Old Testament (tho' in No. XV.

some places we translate it, *strength*) and charges it therefore upon the Papists that they make St Peter a god, when they make him the rock on which the church is built. God is the rock, for he is in himself immutable and immovable, and he is to all that seek him and fly to him an impenetrable shelter, and to all that trust in him an everlasting foundation. 2. His work is perfect. His work of creation was so, all very good; his works of providence are so, or will be so in due time, and when the mystery of God shall be finished, the perfection of his works will appear to all the world; nothing that God doth can be mended, Eccl. iii. 14. God was now perfecting what he had promised and begun, for his people Israel, and from the perfection of this work they must take occasion to give him the glory of the perfection of all his works. The best of mens works are imperfect, they have their flaws, and defects, and are left unfinished: but as for God his work is perfect; if he begin he will make an end. 3. All his ways are judgment. The ends of his ways are all righteous, and he is wise in the choice of the means, in order to those ends. Judgment signifies both prudence and justice. The ways of the Lord are right, Hos. xiv. 9. 4. He is a God of truth, whose word we may take and rely upon, for he cannot lie, who is faithful to all his promises, nor shall his threatnings fall to the ground. 5. He is without iniquity; one who never cheated any that trusted in him, never wronged any that appealed to his justice, nor ever was hard upon any that cast themselves upon his mercy. 6. Just and right is he. As he will not wrong any by punishing them more than they deserve, so he will not fail to recompense all those that serve him, or suffer for him. He is indeed just and right; for he will effectually take care that none shall lose by him. Now what a bright and amiable idea doth this one verse give us of the God whom we worship; and what reason have we then to love him and fear him, to live a life of delight in him, dependence on him, and devotedness to him; this is our rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him; nor none can be, Psal. xcii. 15.

3. A high charge exhibited against the Israel of God, whose character was in all respects the reverse to that of the God of Israel, ver. 5. (1.) They have corrupted themselves. Or, It has corrupted itself; the body of the people has: the whole head sick, and the whole heart faint. God did not corrupt them, for just and right is he; but they are themselves the sole authors of their own sin and ruin; and both are included in this word. They have debauched themselves: For every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust. And they have destroyed themselves, Hos. xiii. 9. If thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear the guilt and grief, Prov. ix. 12. (2.) Their spot is not the spot of his children. Even God's children have their spots, while they are in this imperfect state; for if we say, we have no sin, no spot, we deceive ourselves. But the sin of Israel was none of those; it was not an infirmity which they strove against, watched and prayed against, but an evil which their hearts were fully set in them to do: For (3.) They were a perverse and crooked generation, that were acted by a spirit of contradiction, and therefore would do what was forbidden, because it was forbidden; would set up their own humour and fancy in opposition to the will of God, were impatient of reproof, hated to be reformed, and went on frowardly in the way of their heart. The Chaldee paraphrase reads this verse thus; They have scattered, or changed themselves, and not him; even the children that served idols; a generation that has depraved its own works, and alienated itself. Idolaters cannot hurt God, nor do any damage to his works, or make him a stranger to this world. See Job. xxxv. 6. No, all the hurt they do, is to themselves, and their own works. The learned bishop Patrick gives another reading of it, Did he do him any hurt? i. e. Is God the rock to be blamed for the evils that should befall Israel? No, His children are their blot, i. e. All the evil that comes upon them, is the fruit of their childrens wickedness; for the whole generation of them is crooked and perverse. All that are ruined, ruin themselves; they die, because they will die.

4. A pathetical expostulation with this provoking people for their ingratitude, ver. 6. Do ye thus requite the Lord? Surely you will not hereafter be so base and disingenuous in your carriage towards him, as you have been. (1.) He minds them of the obligations God had laid upon them to serve him, and to cleave to him. He had been a father to them, had begotten them, fed them, carried them, nursed them, and born their manners; and would they spurn at the bowels of a father? He had bought them; had been at a vast expence of miracles to bring them out of Egypt; had given men for them, and people for their life. Isa. xliii. 4. Is not he thy father, thy owner? so some, that has an incontestible propriety in thee, and the ox knoweth his owner. He has made thee, and brought thee into being; established thee, and kept thee in being; has he not done so? Can you deny the engagements you lie under to him, in consideration of the great things he has done and designed for you? And are not our obligations, as baptised Christians, equally great and strong to our Creator that made us, our Redeemer that bought us, and our Sanctifier that hath established us? (2.) From hence he infers the evil of deserting him, and rebelling against him. For, 1. It was base ingratitude. Do ye thus requite the Lord? Are these the returns you make him for all his favours to you? The powers you have from him

him will you employ them against him? See *Mic. vi. 3, 4. Job. x. 32.* This is such monstrous villainy, as all the world will cry shame on: call a man ungrateful, and you can call him no worse. 2. It was prodigious madness; *O foolish people and unwise.* Fools, and double fools; *who has bewitched you?* *Gal. iii. 1.* Fools indeed, to disoblige one on whom you have such a necessary dependence! To forsake your own mercies for lying vanities! Note, All wilful sinners, especially sinners in Israel, are the most unwise, and the most ungrateful people in the world.

7. ¶ Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee, thy elders, and they will tell thee. 8. When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. 9. For the LORD's portion is his people: Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. 10. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness: he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. 11. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; 12. So the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him. 13. He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields, and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock. 14. Butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat, and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape.

Moses having in general represented God to them as their great benefactor, whom they were bound in gratitude to observe and obey; in these verses gives particular instances of God's kindness to them, and concern for them.

1. Some instances were ancient, and for proof of them, he appeals to the records, *ver. 7. Remember the days of old, i. e.* Keep in remembrance the history of those days, and of the wonderful providences of God concerning the old world, and concerning your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, you will find a constant series of mercies attending them, and how long since things were in working towards that which is now come to pass. Note, The authentick histories of ancient times are of singular use, and especially the history of the church in its infancy, both the Old Testament and the New Testament church.

2. Others were more modern; and for proof of them, he appeals to their fathers and elders that were now alive and with them. Parents must diligently teach their children, not only the word of God, his laws, *Deut. vi. 7.* and the meaning of his ordinances, *Exod. xii. 26.* but his works also, and the methods of his providence. See *Psal. lxxviii. 3, 4, 6, 7.* And children should desire the knowledge of those things which will be of use to engage them to their duty, and to direct them in it.

Three things are here enlarged upon as instances of God's kindness to his people Israel, and strong obligations upon them never to forsake him.

1. The early designation of the land of Canaan for their inheritance; for herein it was a type and figure of our heavenly inheritance, that it was of old ordained and prepared in the divine counsels, *ver. 8.* When the earth was divided among the sons of men, in the days of Peleg, after the flood, and each family had its lot, in which it must settle, and by degrees grow up into a nation, then God had Israel in his thoughts, and in his eye; for designing this good land into which they were now going, to be in due time an inheritance for them, he ordered that the posterity of Canaan, rather than any other of the families then in being, should be planted there in the mean time, to keep possession as it were till Israel was ready for it; because those families were under the curse of Noah, by which they were condemned to servitude and ruin, *Gen. ix. 25.* and therefore would be the more justly, honourably, easily, and effectually rooted out, when the fulness of time was come that Israel should take possession. Thus he set the bounds of that people with an eye to the designed number of the children of Israel, that they might have just as much as would serve their turn. And some observe, that Canaan himself with his eleven sons, *Gen. x. 15, &c.* make up just the number of the twelve tribes of Israel. Note, 1. The wisdom of God has appointed the bounds of mens habitation, and determined both the place and time of our living in the world, *Acts xvii. 26.* When he gave the earth to the children of men, *Psal. cxv. 16.* it was not that every man might catch as he could; no, he divides to nations their inheritance, and will have every one to know his own, and not to invade another's property. 2. Infinite wisdom has a vast reach, and designs before-hand what is brought to pass long after; *Known unto God are all his works* from the beginning to the end, *Acts xv. 18.* but they are not so to us, *Eccl. iii. 11.* 3. The great God, in governing the world, and ordering the affairs of

states and kingdoms, has a special regard to his church and people, and consults their good in all. See *2 Chron. xvi. 9.* and *Isa. xlv. 4.* The Canaanites thought they had as good and sure a title to their land, as any of their neighbours had to theirs; but God intended they should only be tenants till the Israelites, their landlords, came. Thus God serves his own purposes of kindness to his people by those that neither know him, nor love them, *who mean not so, neither doth their heart think so,* *Mic. iv. 12.*

The reason given for this particular care God took for this people, so long before they were either born or thought of (as I may say) in our world, doth yet more magnify the kindness, and make it obliging beyond expression, *ver. 9. for the Lord's portion is his people.* All the world is his, he is owner and possessor of heaven and earth, but his church is his in a peculiar manner: it is his demesne, his vineyard, his garden enclosed: he has a particular delight in it, it is the beloved of his soul, in it he walks, he dwells, it is his rest for ever. He has a particular concern for it, keeps it as the apple of his eye; he has particular expectations from it, as a man has from his portion; has a much greater rent of honour, glory, and worship, from that distinguished remnant than from all the world beside. That God should be his peoples portion is easy to be accounted for, for he is their joy and felicity, but how they should be his portion, who neither needs them, nor can be benefited by them, must be resolved into the wondrous condescensions of free grace. *Even so, Father, because it seemed good in thine eyes so to call and count them.*

2. The forming of them into a people that they might be fit to enter upon this inheritance, like an heir of age, at the time appointed of the father. And herein also Canaan was a figure of the heavenly inheritance, for as it was from eternity proposed and designed for all God's spiritual Israel, so they are in time, (and it is a work of time) fitted and made meet for it, *Col. i. 12.* The deliverance of Israel out of slavery by the destruction of their oppressors was attended with so many wonders obvious to sense, and had been so often spoken of, that it needed not to be mentioned in this song: but the gracious works God wrought upon them would be less taken notice of, than the glorious works he had wrought for them, and therefore he chuseth rather to instance in them. A great deal was done to model this people, to cast them into some shape, and to fit them for the great things designed them in the land of promise; and it is here most elegantly described.

(1.) He found them in a desert land, *ver. 10.* This refers, no doubt, to the wilderness through which God brought them to Canaan, and in which he took so much pains with them, it is called *the church in the wilderness,* *Acts vii. 38.* There it was born and nursed, and educated, that all might appear to be divine, and from heaven, since they had there no communication with any part of this earth either for food or learning. But because he is said to find them there, it seems designed also to represent both the ill state and the ill character of that people when God began first to appear for them. (1.) Their condition was forlorn, Egypt was to them a desert land, and a vast howling wilderness, for they were bond-slaves in it, and cried by reason of their oppression, and were perfectly bewildered and at a loss for relief; there God found them, and thence he fetched them. And (2.) Their disposition was very unpromising, so ignorant were the generality of them in divine things, so stupid and unapt to receive the impressions of them, so peevish and humourfome, so froward and quarrelfome, and withal so strangely addicted to the idolatries of Egypt, that they might well be said to be found in a desert land; for one might as reasonably expect a crop of corn from a barren wilderness, as any good fruit of service to God from a people of such a character. Those that are renewed and sanctified by grace, should often remember what they were by nature.

(2.) He led him about and instructed him. When God had them in the wilderness he did not bring them directly to Canaan, but made them go a great compass round, and so he instructed them; *i. e.* 1. By this means he took time to instruct them, and gave them commandments as they were able to receive them. Those whose business it is to instruct others, must not expect it will be done of a sudden; learners must have time to learn. 2. By this means he tried their faith and patience, and dependence upon God, and enured them to the hardships of the wilderness, and so instructed them. Every stage had something in it that was instructive; even when he chastened them, he thereby taught them out of his law. It is said, *Psal. cvii. 7.* That he led them forth by the right way; and yet here, that he led them about; for God always leads his people the right way, however to us it may seem about: so that the furthest way about, proves, if not the next way, yet the best way home to Canaan. How God instructed them, is explained long after, *Neh. ix. 13.* Thou gavest them right judgments and true laws, good statutes and commandments; and especially, *ver. 20.* Thou gavest them also thy good Spirit to instruct them, and he instructs effectually. We may well imagine, how unfit that people had been for Canaan, had they not first gone through the discipline of the wilderness.

(3.) He kept him as the apple of his eye, with all the care and tenderness that could be, from the malignant influences of an open sky and air, and all the perils of an inhospitable desert. The pillar of a cloud and fire was both a guide and a guard to them.

(4.) He

(4.) He did that for them, which the eagle doth for her nest of young ones, *ver. 11, 12.* The similitude was touched, *Exod. xix. 4.* *I bare you on eagles wings;* here it is enlarged upon. Eagles are observed to have a strong affection to their young, and to shew it not only as other creatures, by protecting them, and making provision for them, but by educating them, and teaching them to fly. For that purpose she stirs them up out of the nest, where they lie dozing, flutters over them, to shew them how they must use their wings, and then useth them to fly upon her wings, till they have learned to fly upon their own. This, by the way, is an example to parents to train up their children to business, and not to indulge them in idleness, and the love of ease. God did thus by Israel; when they were in love with their slavery, and loth to leave it; God, by Moses, stirred them up to aspire after liberty, and many a time kept them from returning to the house of bondage again. He carried them out of Egypt, led them into the wilderness, and now at length had led them through it. The Lord alone did lead him, he needed not any assistance, nor did he take any to be partner with him in the achievement; which was a good reason why they should serve the Lord only, and no other so much as in partnership, much less in rivalry with him. There was no strange God with him to contribute to Israel's salvation, and therefore there should be none to share in Israel's homage and adoration, *Psal. lxxxix. 9.*

3. The settling of them in a good land. This was done in part already, in the happy planting of the two tribes and a half, an earnest of what would speedily and certainly be done for the rest of the tribes.

1. They were blessed with glorious victories over their enemies; *ver. 13.* He made him ride on the high places of the earth, *i. e.* he brought him on with conquest, and brought him home with triumph. He rode over the high places, or strong holds that were kept against him; sat in ease and honour upon the fruitful hills of Canaan; in Egypt they looked mean and were so, in poverty and disgrace: but in Canaan they looked great, and were so, advanced and enriched, they rode in state, as a people whom the King of kings did delight to honour.

2. With great plenty of all good things. Not only the ordinary increase of the field, but which was uncommon, *Hony out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock.* Which may refer either (1.) To their miraculous supply with fresh water out of the rock that followed them in the wilderness; which is called *hony and oil*, because the necessity they were reduced to made it as sweet and acceptable as honey and oil at another time. Or, (2.) To the great abundance of honey and oil they should find in Canaan, even in those parts that were least fertile. The rocks of Canaan should yield a better increase than the fields and meads of other countries. Other of the products of Canaan are mentioned, *ver. 14.* Such abundance, and such variety of wholesome food, and every thing the best in its kind, that every meal might be a feast if they pleased. Excellent bread made of the best corn here called the *kidneys of the wheat*, for a grain of wheat is not much unlike a kidney: butter and milk in abundance; the flesh of cattle well fed; and for their drink no worse than the *pure blood of the grape.* So indulgent a Father was God to them, and so kind a benefactor. Ainsworth makes the plenty of good things in Canaan to be a figure of the fruitfulness of Christ's kingdom, and the heavenly comforts of his word and spirit; for the children of his kingdom he has *butter and milk*, the sincere milk of the word, and *strong meat* for *strong men*, with the *wine that makes glad the heart.*

15. ¶ But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation. 16. They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger. 17. They sacrificed unto devils not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not. 18. Of the rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee.

We have here a description of the apostasy of Israel from God, which would shortly come to pass, and which already they had a disposition to. One would have thought a people under so many obligations to their God, in duty, gratitude, and interest, should never have turned from him, but alas, they turned aside quickly. Here are two great instances of their wickedness, and each of them amounted to an apostasy from God.

1. Security and sensuality, pride and insolence, and the other common abuses of plenty and prosperity, *ver. 15.* These people were called Jeshurun, an upright people. So some; a feeling people, so others: but they soon lost the reputation both of their knowledge, and of their righteousness, for being well fed. (1.) They waxed fat, and grew thick, *i. e.* they indulged themselves in all manner of luxury, and gratifications of their appetites, as if they had nothing to do but to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts of it. They grew fat, *i. e.* they grew big and unwieldy, mindless of business, and unfit for it; dull and stupid, careless and

senseless, and this was the effect of their plenty. Thus the *prosperity of fools destroys them*, *Prov. i. 22.* Yet this was not the worst of it. (2.) They kicked; they grew proud and insolent, and lift up the heel even against God himself; if God rebuked them either by his prophets, or by his providence, they kicked against the goad, as an untamed heifer, or a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, and in their rage persecuted the prophets, and flew in the face of providence itself. And thus he forsook God that made him; not paying due respects to his Creator, nor answering the ends of his creation, and put an intolerable contempt upon the rock of his salvation, as if he were not indebted to him for any past favours; nor had any dependence upon him for the future. Those that make a god of themselves, and a god of their bellies in pride and wantonness, and cannot bear to be told of it, certainly thereby forsake God, and shew how lightly they esteem him.

2. Idolatry was the great instance of their apostasy; and which the former led them to, as it made them sick of their religion; self-willed, and fond of changes. Observe,

1. What sort of gods they chose and offered sacrifice to, when they forsook the God that made them, *ver. 16, 17.* This aggravated their sin, that those very services, which they should have done to the true God they did, (1.) To strange gods, that could not pretend ever to have done them any kindness, or laid them under any obligation to them; gods that they had no knowledge of, nor could expect any benefit by, for they were strangers. Or, they are called strange gods, because they were other than the one only true God to whom they were betrothed, and ought to have been faithful. (2.) To new gods, that came newly up, for even in religion, the antiquity of which is one of its honours; vain minds have strangely affected novelty, and in contempt of the ancient of days have been fond of new gods. A new god! Can there be a more monstrous absurdity? Would we find the right way to rest, we must ask for the good old way, *Jer. vi. 16.* It was true, their fathers had worshipped other gods, *Josh. xxiv. 2;* and perhaps it had been some little excuse if the children had returned to them, but to serve new gods whom their fathers feared not, and to like them the better for being new, was to open a door to endless idolatries. (3.) They were such as were no gods at all, but meer counterfeits and pretenders; their names the inventions of mens fancies, and their images the work of mens hands. Nay, (4.) They were devils. So far from being gods, fathers, and benefactors, to mankind, that really they were destroyers; so the word signifies; such as aimed to do mischief: if there were any spirits or invisible powers that possessed their idol-temples and images, they were evil spirits, and malignant powers, whom yet they did not need to worship, for fear they should hurt them, as they say the Indians do; for they that faithfully worship God are out of the devil's reach: nay, the devil can destroy those only that sacrifice to him. How mad are idolaters, who forsake the rock of salvation, to run themselves upon the rock of perdition?

2. What a great affront this was to Jehovah their God:

1. It was justly interpreted a forgetting of him, *ver. 18.* of the rock that begat thee thou art unmindful. Mindfulness of God would prevent sin, but when the world is served, and the flesh indulged, God is forgotten; and can any thing be more base and unworthy than to forget the God that is the author of our being, by whom we subsist, and in whom we live and move? And see what comes of it, *Isa. xvii. 10, 11.* Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength, tho' the strange slips be pleasant plants at first, yet the harvest at last will be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow. There is nothing got by forgetting God.

2. It was justly repented as an inexcusable offence. They provoked him to jealousy, and to anger (*ver. 16.*) for their idols were abominations to him. See here God's displeasure against idols, whether they be set up in the heart or in the sanctuary. 1. He is jealous of them, as rivals with him for the throne in the heart. 2. He hates them, as enemies to his crown and government. 3. He is and will be very angry with those that have any respect or affection for them. Those consider not what they do that provoke God, for who knows the power of his anger?

19. And when the LORD saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters. 20. And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very forward generation, children in whom is no faith. 21. They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God, they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people, I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. 22. For a fire is kindled in my anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains. 23. I will heap mischiefs upon them, I will spend mine arrows upon them. 24. They shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction: I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poyson of serpents of the

the dust. 25. The sword without, and terrour within shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling *also*, with the man of gray hairs.

The method of this song follows the method of the predictions in the foregoing chapter, and therefore after the revolt of Israel from God, described in the foregoing verses, here follows immediately the resolves of divine justice concerning them; we deceive ourselves if we think that God will thus be mocked by a foolish, faithless people that play fast and loose with him.

1. He had delighted in them, but now he would reject them with detestation and disdain, *ver. 19.* When the Lord saw their treachery, and folly, and base ingratitude, he abhorred them; he despised them. So some read it. Sin makes us odious in the sight of the holy God; and no sinners are so loathsome to him, as those that he has called, and that have called themselves his sons and his daughters, and yet have been provoking to him. Note, The nearer any are to God in profession, the more noisome are they to him if they are defiled in a sinful way, *Psal. cvi. 39.*

2. He had given them the tokens of his presence with them, and his favour to them: but now he would withdraw, and *hide his face from them, ver. 20.* His *hiding his face* signifies his great displeasure, they had *turned the back* upon God, and now God would *turn his back* upon them, (compare *Jer. xviii. 17.* with *Jer. ii. 27.*) but here it notes also the slowness of God's proceedings against them in a way of judgment. They began in their apostasy with omissions of good, and so proceed to commissions of evil. In like manner God will first suspend his favours, and let them see what the issue of that will be, what a friend they lose when they provoke God to depart, and will try whether that will bring them to repentance. Thus we find God hiding himself, as it were, in expectation of the event, *Isa. lvii. 17.* To justify himself in leaving them, he shews that they were such as there was no dealing with, for, 1. They were froward, and a people that could not be pleased; or, obstinate in sin, and that could not be convinced and reclaimed. 2. They were faithless, and a people that could not be trusted. When he saved them, and took them into covenant, he said, *Surely they are children that will not lie, Isa. lxiii. 8.* but when they proved otherwise, *children in whom is no faith*, they deserved to be abandoned, and that the God of truth should have no more to do with them.

3. He had done every thing to make them easy, and to please them, but now he would do that against them which should be most vexatious to them. The punishment here answers the sin, *ver. 21.* (1.) They had provoked God with despicable deities, which were not gods at all, but vanities; creatures of their own imagination, that could not pretend either to merit, or to repay the respects of their worshippers; the more vain and vile the gods were after which they went a whoring, the greater was the offence to that great and good God whom they set them up in competition with, and contradiction to. This put two great evils into their idolatry, *Jer. ii. 13.* (2.) God would therefore plague them with despicable enemies, that were worthless, weak, and inconsiderable, and not deserving the name of a people, which was a great mortification to them, and aggravated the oppressions they groaned under. The more base the people were that tyrannized over them, the more barbarous they would be, none so insolent as a beggar on horseback; besides that it would be infamous to Israel, who had so often triumphed over great and mighty nations, to be themselves trampled upon by the weak and foolish, and to come under the curse of Canaan who was to be a servant of servants. But God can make the weakest instrument a scourge to the strongest sinner; and they that by sin insult their mighty Creator are justly insulted by the meanest of their fellow-creatures. This was remarkably fulfilled in the days of the judges when they were sometimes oppressed by the very Canaanites themselves, whom they had subdued, as *Judg. iv. 2.* But the apostle applies it to the conversion of the Gentiles, who had been not a people in covenant with God, and foolish in divine things, yet were brought into the church solely to the grief of the Jews, who, upon all occasions, shewed a great indignation at it, which was both their sin and their punishment, as envy always is, *Rom. x. 19.*

4. He had planted them in a good land, and replenished them with all good things, but now he would strip them of all their comforts, and bring them to ruin. The judgments threatened are very terrible, *ver. 22—25.* (1.) The fire of God's anger shall consume them, *ver. 22.* Are they proud of their plenty? It shall burn up the increase of the earth: are they confident of their strength, it shall destroy the very foundations of their mountains: there is no fence against the judgments of God when they come with commission to lay all waste. It shall burn to the lowest hell, *i. e.* it shall bring them to the very depth of misery in this world, which yet would be but a faint resemblance of the compleat and endless misery of sinners in the other world. The damnation of hell (as our Saviour calls it) is the fire of God's anger, fastning upon the guilty conscience of a sinner to its unexpressible and everlasting torment, *Isa. xxx. 33.* (2.) The arrows of God's judgments shall be spent upon them, till his quiver is quite exhausted, *ver. 23.* The judgments of God, like arrows, fly swiftly, *Psal. lxiv. 7.* reach those at a distance who flatter

themselves with hopes of escaping them, *Psal. xxi. 8, 12.* they come from an unseen hand, but wound mortally, for God never misseth his mark, *2 Kings xxii. 34.* The particular judgments here threatened are, (1.) Famine, they shall be burnt, or parched, with hunger. (2.) Pestilence and other diseases, here called burning heat, and bitter destruction. (3.) The insults of the inferior creatures; *the teeth of beasts, and the poison of serpents, ver. 24.* (4.) War and the fatal consequences of it, *ver. 25.* (1.) Perpetual frights. When the sword is without, there cannot but be terror within; *2 Cor. vii. 5.* without were fightings, within were fears; those who cast off the fear of God, are justly exposed to the fear of enemies. (2.) Universal deaths; the sword of the Lord when it is sent to lay all waste will destroy without distinction; neither the strength of the young man, nor the beauty of the virgin, nor the innocency of the suckling, nor the gravity or infirmity of the man of gray hairs, will be their security from the sword when it devours one as well as another. Such devastations doth war make, especially when it is pushed on by men as ravenous as wild beasts, and as venomous as serpents, *ver. 24.* See here what mischief sin doth, and reckon those fools that make a mock at it.

26. I said, I would scatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men: 27. Were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy, lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely, and lest they should say, Our hand is high, and the LORD hath not done all this. 28. For they are a nation void of counsel, neither is there any understanding in them. 29. O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end! 30. How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up? 31. For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges. 32. For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter. 33. Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps. 34. Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures? 35. To me belongeth vengeance and recompence, their foot shall slide in due time, for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste. 36. For the LORD shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants; when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left. 37. And he shall say, Where are their gods, their rock in whom they trusted. 38. Which did eat the fat of their sacrifices, and drank the wine of their drink-offerings? let them rise up and help you, and be your protection.

After many terrible threatnings of deserved wrath and vengeance, we have here surprizing intimations of mercy, undeserved mercy, which rejoiceth against judgment, and by which it appears that God has no pleasure in the death of sinners, but would rather they should turn and live.

1. In jealousy for his own honour, he will not make a full end of them, *ver. 26, 27, 28.* (1.) It cannot be denied, but that they deserved to be utterly ruined, and that their remembrance should be made to cease from among men; so that the name of an Israelite should never be known but in history; for they were a nation void of counsel, *ver. 28.* The most sottish inconsiderate people that ever were; that would not believe the glory of God, tho' they saw it, nor understand his loving-kindness, tho' they tasted it and lived upon it. Of them who could cast off such a God, such a law, such a covenant, for vain and dunghil deities, it might truly be said, there is no understanding in them. (2.) It had been an easy thing with God to ruin them, and blot out the remembrance of them; when the greatest part of them were cut off by the sword, it was but scattering the remnant into some remote, obscure corners of the earth, where they should never have been heard of more, and the thing had been done. See *Ezek. v. 12.* God can destroy those that are most strongly fortified, disperse those that are most closely united, and bury those names in perpetual oblivion that have been most celebrated. (3.) Justice demanded it. I said I would scatter them. It is fit they should be cut off from the earth, that have cut themselves off from their God; why should they not be dealt with according to their deserts? (4.) Wisdom considered the pride and insolency of the enemy, which would take occasion from the ruin of a people that had been so dear to God, and for whom he had done such great things, to reflect upon God, and to imagine that because they had got the better of Israel, they had carried the day against the God of Israel. The adversaries will say, our hand is high; high indeed, when it has been too high for those whom God himself fought for; nor will they consider that the Lord has done all this; but will dream that they have done it in despite of him, as if the God of Israel

Israel were as weak and impotent; and as easily run down as the pretended deities of other nations. (5.) In consideration of this, mercy prevails for the sparing of a remnant, and the saving of that unworthy people from utter ruin. *I feared the wrath of the enemy.* It is an expression after the manner of men; it is certain God fears no man's wrath, but he acted in this matter as if he had feared it. Those few good people in Israel that had a concern for the honour of God's name, *feared the wrath of the enemy* in this instance more than in any other, as Joshua, chap. vii. 9. and David often; and because they feared it, God himself is said to fear it: He needed not Moses to plead it with him, but minded himself of it, *What will the Egyptians say?* Let all those whose hearts tremble for the ark of God and his Israel, comfort themselves with this, that God will *work for his own name*, and will not suffer it to be profaned and polluted: how much soever we deserve to be disgraced, God will never *disgrace the throne of his glory*.

2. In concern for their welfare, he earnestly wiltheth and desires their conversion; and in order to that, their serious consideration of their latter end, ver. 29. Observe (1.) Tho' God had pronounced them a foolish people, and of no understanding; yet he wiltheth they were wise, as Deut. v. 29. *O that there were such a heart in them!* and Psal. xciv. 8. *Ye fools, when will ye be wise?* God delights not to see sinners ruin themselves, but desires they will help themselves; and if they will, he is ready to help them. (2.) It is a great piece of wisdom, and will contribute much to the return of sinners to God, seriously to consider the latter end; or, the future state. It is here meant particularly of that which God by Moses had foretold concerning this people in the latter days: but it may be applied more generally. We ought to understand and consider, (1.) The latter end of life, and the future state of the soul. To think of death as our removal from a world of sense to a world of spirits; the final period of our state of trial and probation, and our entrance upon an unchangeable state of recompence and retribution. (2.) The latter end of sin, and the future state of those that live and die in it. O that men would consider the happiness they will lose, and the misery they will certainly plunge themselves into, if they *go on still in their trespasses; what will be in the end hereof?* Jer. v. 31. *Jerusalem forgot this, and therefore came down wonderfully,* Lam. i. 9.

He calls to mind the great things he had done for them formerly, as a reason why he should not quite cast them off. This seems to be the meaning of that, ver. 30, 31. How should one Israelite have been too hard for a thousand Canaanites, as they have been many a time, but that God, who is greater than all gods, fought for them? and so it comes in like that, Isa. lxiii. 10, 11. When he was *turned to be their enemy*, as here, and fought against them for their sins, *then he remembered the days of old*, saying, *where is he that brought them out of the sea?* So here, his arm begins to awake as in the days of old, *against the wrath of the enemy*, Psal. cxxxviii. 7. There was a time when the enemies of Israel were sold by their own rock, i. e. their own idol gods, who could not help them, but betrayed them, because Jehovah, the God of Israel, had shut them up, as sheep for the slaughter: For the enemies themselves must own, that their gods were a very unequal match for the God of Israel. *For their vine is of the vine of Sodom*, ver. 32, 33. This must be meant of the enemies of Israel, who therefore fell so easily before the sword of Israel, because they were ripe for ruin, and the measure of their iniquity was full.

Yet these verses may be understood of the strange prevalency of the enemies of Israel against them, when God made use of them as the *rod of his anger*, Isa. x. 5, 6. How should one Canaanite chase a thousand Israelites, (as it is threatened against those that trusted to Egypt for help, Isa. xxx. 17. *One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one*) unless Israel's rock had deserted them, and given them up? for otherwise, however they may impute their power unto their gods, Hab. i. 11. as the Philistines imputed their victory to Dagon; it is certain, the enemies rock could not have prevailed against the rock of Israel; God would soon have subdued their enemies, (Psal. lxxxix. 14.) but that the wickedness of Israel, delivered them into their hands: For their vine, that is Israel's, is of the *vine of Sodom*, ver. 32, 33. They were planted a choice vine, wholly a right seed, but by sin were become the *degenerate plant of a strange vine*, Jer. ii. 21. and not only transcribed the iniquity of Sodom, but out-did it, Ezek. xvi. 48. God called them his vineyard, his *pleasant plant*, Isa. v. 7. But their fruits were (1.) Very offensive, and displeasing to God, bitter as gall. (2.) Very malignant and pernicious one to another, *like the cruel venom of asps*. Some understand this of their punishment; their sin would be *bitterness in the latter end*; it would *bite like a serpent*, and *sting like an adder*, Job. xx. 14.

4. He resolves upon the destruction of those at last that had been their persecutors and oppressors. When the cup of trembling goes round, the king of Babel shall pledge it at last, Jer. xxv. 26. and see Isa. li. 22, 23. The day is coming, when the judgment that began at the house of God, shall end with the sinner and ungodly, 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18.

God will in due time bring down the church's enemies, 1. In *displeasure against their wickedness*, which he takes notice of, and keeps an account of, ver. 34, 35. Is not this implacable fury of theirs against Israel, *laid up in store with me*, to be reckoned for hereafter, when it shall be made to appear, that

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to me belongs vengeance? Some understand it of the sin of Israel; especially, their persecuting the prophets, which was laid up in store against them, from the *blood of righteous Abel*, Matth. xxiii. 35. However, it teacheth us, that the wickedness of the wicked is all *laid up in store with God*. (1.) He observes it, Psal. xc. 8. He knows both what the vine is, and what the grapes: what the temper of the mind, and what the actions of the life. (2.) He keeps a record of it, both in his own omniscience, and in the sinner's conscience; and this is *sealed up among his treasures*, which notes both safety and secrecy: These books cannot be lost; nor will they be opened till the great day. See Hos. xiii. 12. (3.) He often delays the punishment of sin for a great while, it is laid up in store, till the measure be full, and the day of divine patience be expired. See Job xxi. 29, 30. (4.) There is a day of reckoning coming, when all the treasures of guilt and wrath will be broken up, and the sin of sinners shall surely find them out. 1. The thing itself will certainly be done, for the Lord is a *God to whom vengeance belongs*, and therefore he will repay, Isa. lix. 18. This is quoted by the apostle, to shew the severity of God's wrath against those that revolt from the faith of Christ, Heb. x. 30. 2. It will be done in due time, in the best time; nay, it will be done in a short time. *The day of their calamity is at hand*; and tho' it may seem to tarry, it *lingers not*, it *slumbers not*, but it *makes haste*. In one hour shall the judgment of Babylon come.

2. He will do it in *compassion to his own people*, who tho' they had greatly provoked him, yet stood in relation to him, and their misery appealed to his mercy, ver. 36. *The Lord shall judge his people*, i. e. judge for them against their enemies, plead their cause, and break the yoke of oppression, under which they had long groaned, *repenting himself for his servants*; not changing his mind, but changing his way, and fighting for them, as he had fought against them, *when he sees that their power is gone*. This plainly points at the deliverances God wrought for Israel, by the judges, out of the hands of those to whom he had sold them for their sins. See Judg. ii. 11—19. And how *his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel*, Judg. x. 16. And this when they were reduced to the last extremity, God helped them, when they could not help themselves; for there was *none shut up or left*, i. e. none that dwelt either in cities or walled towns, in which they were shut up, nor any that dwelt in scattered houses in the country, in which they were left at a distance from neighbours. Note, God's time to appear for the deliverance of his people, is, when things are at the worst with them. God tries his people's faith, and stirs up prayer, by letting things go to the worst, and then magnifies his own power, and fills the faces of his enemies with shame, and the hearts of his people with so much the greater joy, by rescuing them out of extremity, as *brands out of the burning*.

3. He will do it in *contempt*, and to the *reproach* of the idol gods, ver. 37, 38. *Where are their gods?* Two ways it may be understood; 1. That God would do that for his people, which the idols they had served could not do for them. They had forsaken God, and been very liberal in their sacrifices to idols; had brought to their altars the *fat of their sacrifices*, and the *wine of their drink-offerings*, which they supposed their deities to feed upon, and on which they feasted with them: Now, saith God, will these gods you have made your court to, at so great an expence, help you in your distress, and so repay you for all your charges in their service? *Go, get you to the gods you have served, and let them deliver you*, Judg. x. 14. This is intended to convince them of their folly in forsaking a God that could help them, for those that could not, and so to bring them to repentance, and qualify them for deliverance. When the adulteress shall *follow after her lovers*, and *not overtake them*; pray to her idols, and receive no kindness from them, *then she shall say, I will go and return to my first husband*, Hos. ii. 7. See Isa. xvi. 12. Jer. ii. 28. Or, 2. That God would do that *against his enemies*, which the idols they had served, could not *save them from*. Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar boldly challenged the God of Israel to deliver his worshippers, Isa. xxxvii. 10. Dan. iii. 15. and he did deliver them to the confusion of their enemies. But the God of Israel challenged Bel and Nebo to deliver their worshippers, to *rise up and help them*, and to *be their protection*, Isa. xlvii. 12, 13. but they were so far from helping them, that they themselves, i. e. their images, which was all that was of them, *went into captivity*, Isa. xlvii. 1, 2. Note, Those who trust to any rock but God, will find it sand in the day of their distress; it will fail them then, when they most need it.

39. See now that I, *even I am* he, and *there is no god with me*: I kill, and I make alive: I wound, and I heal: *neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand*. 40. For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever. 41. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. 42. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, (and my sword shall devour flesh) *and that* with the blood of the slain, and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy. 43. Rejoyce, O ye nations *with* his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and

will render vengeance to his adversaries and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people.

This conclusion of the song, speaks three things.

1. Glory to God, *ver.* 39. See now, upon the whole matter, that I, even I am he. Learn this, from the destruction of idolaters, and the inability of their idols to help them. The great God here demands the glory. (1.) Of a *self-existence*, I, even I am he. Thus Moses concludes with that name of God, by which he was first made to know him, *Exod.* iii. 14. I am that I am. I am he that I have been, that I will be, that I have promised to be, that I have threatened to be; all shall find me true to both: The Targum of Uzzielides paraphraseth it thus, *When the word of the Lord shall reveal himself to redeem his people, he shall say to all people, see, that I now am what I am, and have been, and I am what I will be*: Which we know very well how to apply to him, who said to John, *I am he, which is, and was, and is to come*, *Rev.* i. 8. These words, *I, even I am he*, we meet with often in those chapters of Isaiah, where God is encouraging his people to hope for their deliverance out of Babylon, *Isa.* xli. 4.—xliii. 11, 13, 25.—xlv. 4. (2.) Of a *sole supremacy*; there is no god with me. None to help with me, none to cope with me. See *Isa.* xliii. 10, 11. (3.) Of an *absolute sovereignty*, and *universal agency*, I kill and I make alive, i. e. All evil, and all good come from his hand of providence, he forms both the light of life, and the darkness of death, *Isa.* xlv. 7. *Lam.* iii. 37, 38. Or, he kills and wounds his enemies, but heals and makes alive his own people; kills and wounds with his judgments those that revolt from him, and rebel against him; but when they return and repent, he heals them, and makes them alive with his mercy and grace. Or, It notes his incontestible authority to dispose of all his creatures, and the beings he has given them, so as to serve his own purposes by them; *whom he will he slays, and whom he will he keeps alive*, when his judgments are abroad. Or, thus, tho' he kill, yet he makes alive again; *tho' he cause grief, yet will he have compassion*, *Lam.* iii. 32. Tho' he have torn, he will heal us, *Hof.* vi. 1, 2. The Jerusalem Targum reads it, *I kill those that are alive in this world, and make those alive in the other world that are dead*. And some of the Jewish doctors themselves, have observed, that death, and a life after it, that is eternal life, is intimated in these words. (4.) Of an *irresistible power*, which cannot be controlled; *neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand*, those that I have marked for destruction. As no exception can be made against the sentence of God's justice, so no escape can be made from the executions of his power.

2. Terror to his enemies, *ver.* 40, 41, 42. Terror indeed, to those that hate him, as all those do that serve other gods, that persist in wilful disobedience to the divine law, and that malign and persecute his faithful servants; these are they whom God will render vengeance to; those his enemies that will not have him to reign over them. To frighten such in time to repent and return to their allegiance, the wrath of God is here revealed from heaven against them. 1. The divine sentence is ratified with an oath, *ver.* 40. He lifts up his hand to heaven, the habitation of his holiness; this was an ancient and very significant sign used in swearing, *Gen.* xiv. 22. And since he could swear by no greater, he swears by himself, and his own life. Those are miserable without remedy, that have the word and oath of God against them. The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, that the sin of sinners shall be their ruin, if they go on in it. 2. Preparation is made for the execution; the *glittering sword is whet*. See *Psal.* vii. 12. It is a sword bathed in heaven, *Isa.* xxxiv. 5. While the sword is in whetting, space is given to the sinner to repent and make his peace; which if he do not, the wound will be the deeper. And as the sword is whet, so the hand that is to wield it takes hold on judgment with a resolution to go through with it. 3. The execution itself will be very terrible; the *sword shall devour flesh* in abundance, and the *arrows* be made *drunk with blood*, such vast quantities of it shall be shed; the blood of the slain in battle, and of the captives to whom no quarter should be given, but they should be put under military execution. When he begins revenge, he will make an end; for in this also his work is perfect. The critics are much perplexed with the last clause, *From the beginning of revenges upon the enemy*: The learned bishop Patrick (that great master) thinks it may admit this reading, *From the king to the slave of the enemies*, *Jer.* i. 35, 36, 37. When the sword of God's wrath is drawn, it will make bloody work, blood to the horse-bridles, *Rev.* xiv. 20.

3. Comfort to his own people, *ver.* 43. Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people. He concludes the song with words of joy; for in God's Israel there is a remnant whose end will be peace; God's people will rejoice at last, will rejoice everlastingly. Three things are here mentioned as matter of joy. 1. The enlarging of the church's bounds: the apostle applies the first words of this verse to the conversion of the Gentiles, *Rom.* xv. 10. Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. See what the grace of God doth in the conversion of souls, it brings them to rejoice with the people of God; for true religion brings us acquainted with true joy; so great a mistake are they under, that think it tends to make men melancholy. 2. The avenging of the church's controversies upon her adversaries. He will make inquisition for the blood of his

servants, and it shall appear how precious it is to him, for they that spilt it shall have blood given them to drink. 3. The mercy God has in store for his church, and for all that belong to it, he will be merciful to his land, and to his people, i. e. to all every where that fear and serve him: Whatever judgments are brought upon sinners, it shall go well with the people of God, and in this let Jews and Gentiles rejoice together.

44. ¶ And Moses came and spake all the words of this song in the ears of the people, he and Hoshea the son of Nun. 45. And Moses made an end of speaking all these words to all Israel. 46. And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day; which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law. 47. For it is not a vain thing for you: because it is your life; and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it. 48. And the LORD spake unto Moses that self-same day, saying, 49. Get thee up into this mountain Abarim, unto mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho; and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession. 50. And die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people: 51. Because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel, at the waters of Meribah-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel. 52. Yet thou shalt see the land before thee, but thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Israel.

Here is, 1. The solemn delivery of this song to the children of Israel, *ver.* 44, 45. Moses spake it to as many as could hear him, while Joshua, in another assembly at the same time, delivered it to as many as his voice would reach. Thus coming to them from the mouth of both their governours, Moses that was laying down the government, and Joshua that was taking it up, they would see they were both in the same song, and that tho' they changed their commander, there was no change in the divine command; Joshua, as well as Moses, would be a witness against them, if ever they forsook God.

2. An earnest charge to them to mind these, and all the rest of the good words that Moses had said to them. How earnestly doth he long after them all, how very desirous that the word of God might make deep and lasting impressions upon them, how jealous over them with a godly jealousy, lest they should at any time let slip these great things! (1.) The duties he chargeth upon them are, (1.) Carefully to attend to those things themselves; set your hearts both to the laws, and to the promises and threatnings; the blessings and curses, and now at last to this song. Let the mind be closely applied to the consideration of these things; be affected with them; be intent upon your duty, and cleave to it with full purpose of heart. (2.) Faithfully to transmit these things to those that should come after them: what interest you have in your children, or influence upon them, use it for this purpose; and command them (as your father Abraham did, *Gen.* xviii. 19.) to observe to do all the words of this law. They that are good themselves, cannot but desire that their children may be so likewise; and that posterity may keep up religion in their day, and the entail of it may not be cut off. (2.) The arguments he useth to persuade them to make religion their business, and to persevere in it, are, 1. The vast importance of the things themselves which he had charged upon them, *ver.* 47. It is not a vain thing, because it is your life. It is not an indifferent thing, but of absolute necessity; it is not a trifle, but a matter of consequence, a matter of life and death; mind it, and you are made for ever; neglect it, and you are for ever undone. O that men were but fully possessed of this, that religion is their life, even the life of their souls! 2. The vast advantage it would be of to them: through this thing ye shall prolong your days in Canaan, which is a typical promise of that eternal life, which Christ has assured us they shall enter into that keep the commandments of God, *Matth.* xix. 17.

3. Orders given to Moses concerning his death. Now this renowned witness for God has finished his testimony, he must go up to mount Nebo and die; and in the prophecy of Christ's two witnesses there is a plain allusion to Moses and Elias, *Rev.* xi. 6. and perhaps their removal being by martyrdom is no less glorious than the removal either of Moses or Elias. Orders were given to Moses that self-same day, *ver.* 48. Now he had done his work, why should he desire to live a day longer? He had indeed formerly prayed that he might go over Jordan, but now he is entirely satisfied, and, as God had bidden him, saith no more of that matter.

1. God here minds him of the sin he had been guilty of for which he was excluded Canaan, *ver.* 51. that he might the more patiently

patiently bear the rebuke because he had sinned; and that now he might renew his sorrow for that unadvised word, for it is good for the best of men to die repenting of the infirmities they are conscious to themselves of. It was an omission that was thus displeasing to God; he did not *sanctify God*, as he ought to have done *before the children of Israel*, he did not carry himself with a due decorum, in executing the orders he had then received.

2. He minds him of the death of his brother Aaron, *ver. 50*. to make his own the more familiar, and the less formidable. Note, It is a great encouragement to us when we die, to think of our friends that have gone before us through that darksome valley; especially of Christ our elder brother, and great high-priest.

3. He sends him up to a high hill from thence to take a view of the land of Canaan and then die, *ver. 49, 52*. The remembrance of his sin might make death terrible, but the sight God gave him of Canaan took off the terror of it, as it was a token of God's being reconciled to him, and a plain indication to him, that tho' his sin shut him out of the earthly Canaan, yet it should not deprive him of that better country, which in this world can only be seen, and that with an eye of faith. Note, Those may die with comfort and ease whenever God calls for them, notwithstanding the sins they remember against themselves, who have a believing prospect, and a well grounded hope, of eternal life beyond death.

C H A P. XXXIII.

Yet Moses has not done with the children of Israel; he seemed to have taken final leave of them in the close of the foregoing chapter, but still he hath something more to say. He had preached them a farewell sermon, a very copious and pathetic discourse. After sermon he had given out a psalm, a long psalm; and now nothing remains but to dismiss them with a blessing; that blessing he pronounceth in this chapter in the name of the Lord, and so leaves them. 1. He pronounceth them all blessed in what God had done for them already, especially in giving them his law, *ver. 2—5*. 2. He pronounceth a blessing upon each tribe, which is both a prayer for, and a prophecy of their felicity. 1. Reuben, *ver. 6*. 2. Judah, *ver. 7*. 3. Levi, *ver. 8—11*. 4. Benjamin, *ver. 12*. 5. Joseph, *ver. 13—17*. 6. Zebulun and Issachar, *ver. 18, 19*. 7. Gad, *ver. 20*. 8. Dan, *ver. 22*. 9. Naphtali, *ver. 23*. 10. Asher, *ver. 24, 25*. 3. He pronounceth them all in general blessed, upon the account of what God would be to them, and do for them, if they were obedient, *ver. 26—29*.

1. **A**ND this is the blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. 2. And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them. 3. Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand; and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words. 4. Moses commanded us a law: even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob. 5. And he was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people, and the tribes of Israel were gathered together.

The first verse is the title of the chapter: It is a blessing. In the foregoing chapter he had thundered out the terrors of the Lord against Israel for their sin, it was a chapter like Ezekiel's roll full of lamentation, and mourning, and wo. Now to soften that, and that he might not seem to part in anger, he here subjoins a blessing, and leaves his peace which should descend and rest upon all those among them that were the sons of peace. Thus Christ's last work on earth was to *bless his disciples*, *Luk. xxiv. 50*. like Moses here in token of parting friends. Moses blessed them (1.) As a prophet; a man of God. Note, It is a very desirable thing to have an interest in the prayers of those that have an interest in heaven; it is a prophet's reward: And in this blessing Moses not only expresseth his good wishes to this people, but by the spirit of prophecy foretells things to come concerning them, (2.) As a parent to Israel; for so good princes are to their subjects. Jacob upon his death-bed blessed his sons, *Gen. xlix. 1*. in conformity to whose example Moses here blebseth the tribes that were descended from them, to shew that tho' they had been very provoking, yet the entail of the blessing was not cut off. The doing of this immediately before his death, would not only be the more likely to leave an impression upon them, but would be an indication of the great good-will of Moses to them, that he desired their happiness, tho' he must die and not share in it.

He begins his blessing with a lofty description of the glorious appearances of God to them in giving them the law, and the great advantage they had by it.

1. There was a visible and illustrious discovery of the divine majesty; enough to convince and for ever silence atheists, and infidels, to awaken and affect those that were stupid and careless, and to put to shame all secret inclinations to other gods, *ver. 1*. (1.) His

appearance was glorious: he shined forth, like the sun when he goes forth in his strength. Even Seir and Paran, two mountains at some distance were illuminated by the divine glory which appeared on mount Sinai, and reflected some of the rays of it; so bright was the appearance, and so much taken notice of by the adjacent countries. To this the prophet alludes to set forth the wonders of the divine providence, *Hab. iii. 3, 4*. *Psal. xviii. 7; 8, 9*. The Jerusalem Targum has a strange gloss upon this, that when God came down to give the law, he offered it on mount Seir to the Edomites, but they refused it; because they found in it, *thou shalt not kill*. Then he offered it on mount Paran, to the Ishmaelites, but they also refused it, because they found in it, *thou shalt not steal*; and then he came to mount Sinai, and offered it to Israel, and they said, *All that the Lord shall say, we will do*. I would not have transcribed so groundless a conceit but for the antiquity of it. (2.) His attendance was glorious: he came with his holy myriads, as Enoch had long since foretold he should come in the last day, to judge the world, *Jude 14*. These were the angels, those chariots of God in the midst of which the Lord was, on that holy place, *Psal. lxxviii. 17*. They attended the divine majesty, and were employed as his ministers in the solemnities of the day. Hence the law is said to be given by the disposition of angels, *Act. vii. 53*. *Heb. ii. 2*.

2. He gave them his law, which is (1.) Called a fiery law, because it was given them out of the midst of the fire, *Deut. iv. 33*. and because it works like fire; if it be received it is melting, warming, purifying, and burns up the dross of corruption; if it be rejected it hardens, sears, torments, and destroys. The spirit descended in cloven tongues as of fire, for the gospel also is a fiery law. (2.) It is said to go from his right hand, either because he wrote it on tables of stone; or, noting the power and energy of the law, and the divine strength that goes along with it, that it may not return void. Or, it came as a gift to them, and a precious gift it was, a right-hand blessing. (3.) It was an instance of the special kindness he had for them. Yea, he loved the people, *ver. 3*. and therefore tho' it was a fiery law, yet it is said to go for them, *ver. 2*. and in favour to them. Note, The law of God written in the heart, is a certain evidence of the love of God shed abroad there: we must reckon God's law one of the gifts of his grace. Yea he embraced the people, or laid them in his bosom; so the word signifies, which speaks not only the dearest love, but the most tender and careful protection. (4.) All his saints were in his hand. Some understand it particularly of his supporting them and preserving them alive, at mount Sinai, when the terror was so great that Moses himself quaked; they heard the voice of God and lived, *Deut. iv. 33*. Or it notes his forming them into a people by his law; he moulded and managed them, as the Potter doth the clay. Or, they were in his hand to be covered and protected, used and disposed of as the seven stars were in the hand of Christ, *Rev. i. 16*. Note, God has all his saints in his hand, and tho' there are ten thousands of his saints, *ver. 2*. yet his hand with which he measures the waters is large enough, and strong enough to hold them all, and we may be sure that none can pluck them out of his hand, *Joh. x. 28*.

3. He disposed them to receive the law which he gave them, they sat down at thy feet, as scholars at the feet of their master, in token of reverence in attendance and humble submission to what is taught; so Israel sat at the foot of mount Sinai, and promised to hear and do whatever God should say. They were struck to thy feet, so some read it; viz. By the terrors of mount Sinai, which greatly humbled them for the present, *Exod. xx. 19*. Every one then stood ready to receive God's words, and shall do so again when the law shall be publicly read to them, as it was, *Jos. viii. 34*. It is a great privilege when we have heard the words of God to have opportunity of hearing them again, *Joh. xvii. 26*. I have declared thy name and will declare it. So Israel, not only had received the law, but should still receive it by their prayers, and other the lively oracles.

The people are taught, *ver. 4, 5*. in gratitude for the law of God, always to keep up an honourable remembrance both of the law itself, and of Moses by whom it was given. Two of the Chaldee paraphrasts read it, *The children of Israel said, Moses commanded us a law*: And the Jews say, that as soon as a child was able to speak, his father was obliged to teach him these words; *Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob*.

1. They are taught to speak with great respect of the law and to call it, *the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob*. They looked upon it, (1.) As peculiar to them, and that by which they were distinguished from other nations, who neither had the knowledge of it, *Psal. cxlvii. 20*. nor if they had, were under those obligations to observe it that Israel was under: and therefore (saith bishop Patrick) when the Jews conquered any country, they did not force any to embrace the law of Moses, but only to submit to the seven precepts of Noah. (2.) As entailed upon them; for so inheritances are to be transmitted to their posterity. And (3.) As their wealth and true treasure. Those that enjoy the word of God, and the means of grace, have reason to say, that they have a goodly heritage. He is indeed a rich man in whom the word of Christ dwells richly. Perhaps, the law is called their inheritance, because it was given them with their inheritance,

tance, and was so annexed to it that the forsaking of the law would be a forfeiture of the inheritance. See *Psal.* cxix. 111.

2. They are taught to speak with great respect of Moses; and they were the more obliged to keep up his name, because he had not provided for the keeping of it up in his family; his posterity were never called the sons of Moses, as the priests were the sons of Aaron. (1.) They must own Moses a great benefactor to their nation, in that he *commanded them the law*, for tho' it came from the hand of God, it went through the hand of Moses. (2.) *He was king in Jeshurun.* Having *commanded them the law*, as long as he lived, he took care to see it observed, and put in execution, and they were very happy in having such a king, who ruled them, and went in and out before them at all times, but did in a special manner look great, when the *heads of the people were gathered together* in parliament at it were, and Moses was president among them. Some understand this of God himself; he did then declare himself their king, when he gave them the law, and he continued so, as long as they were in Jeshurun, an upright people, and till they rejected him, 1 *Sam.* xii. 12. But it seems rather to be understood of Moses. A good government is a great blessing to any people, and what they have reason to be very thankful for; and that constitution is very happy, which, as Israel's, which, as ours, divides the power between the king in Jeshurun, and the heads of the tribes, when they are gathered together.

6. ¶ Let Reuben live, and not die; and let not his men be few. 7. ¶ And this is the blessing of Judah; and he said, Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people: let his hands be sufficient for him, and be thou an help to him from his enemies.

Here is, 1. The blessing of Reuben. Tho' Reuben had lost the honour of his birthright, yet Moses begins with him, for we should not insult over them that are disgraced, nor desire to perpetuate marks of infamy upon any tho' never so justly fastened at first, *ver.* 6. Moses desires and foretels, (1.) The preserving of this tribe, tho' a frontier tribe on the other side Jordan, yet let it live, and not be either ruined by its neighbours, or lost among them. And perhaps he refers to those chosen men of that tribe, who having had their lot assigned them already, left their families in it, and were now ready to *go over armed before their brethren*, Num. xxxii. 27. let them be protected in this noble expedition, and their heads covered in the day of battle. (2.) The increase of this tribe, *Let not his men be few; or, let his men be a number, i. e.* let it be a numerous tribe: tho' their other honours be lost, so that they shall not excel, yet let them multiply. *Let Reuben live and not die, though his men be few;* so bishop Patrick thinks it may be rendered. Tho' he must not expect to flourish, (*Gen.* xlix. 4.) yet let him not perish. All the Chaldee paraphrasts refer this to the other world; *Let Reuben live in life eternal, and not die the second death.* So Onkelos; *Let Reuben live in this world, and not die that death which the wicked die in the world to come.* So Jonathan, and the Jerusalem Targum.

2. The blessing of Judah; which is put before Levi, because our *Lord sprang out of Judah*, and (as Dr Lightfoot saith) because of the dignity of the kingdom above the priesthood. The blessing, *ver.* 7. may refer, either (1.) To the whole tribe in general. Moses prays for, and prophesies the great prosperity of that tribe. That God would hear his prayers, (see an instance, 2 *Chron.* xiii. 14.) settle him in his lot, prosper him in all his affairs, and give him victory over his enemies. It is taken for granted, that the tribe of Judah would be both a praying tribe, and an active tribe. Lord, saith Moses, hear his prayers, and give success to all his undertakings; *let his hands be sufficient for him*, both in husbandry and in war. The voice of prayer should always be attended with the hand of endeavour, and then we may expect prosperity.

Or, 2. It may refer in particular to David, as a type of Christ; that God would *hear his prayers*, *Psal.* xx. 1. And Christ was *heard always*, Joh. xi. 42. That he would give him victory over his enemies, and success in his great undertakings. See *Psal.* lxxxix. 20. And that prayer, that God would *bring him to his people*, seems to refer to Jacob's prophecies concerning Shiloh, *That to him should the gathering of the people be*, *Gen.* xlix. 10.

The tribe of Simeon is omitted in the blessing, because Jacob had left it under a brand, and it had never done any thing, as Levi had done, to retrieve its honour. It was lessened in the wilderness more than any other of the tribes; and Zimri, who was so notoriously guilty in the matter of Peor but the other day, was of that tribe. Or, because the lot of Simeon was an appendage to that of Judah, that tribe is included in the blessing of Judah. Some copies of the LXX join Simeon with Reuben, *Let Reuben live and not die; and let Simeon be many in number.*

8. ¶ And of Levi he said, *Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters*

of Meribah; 9. Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him, neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant. 10. They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law: they shall put incense before thee, and whole-burnt-sacrifice upon thine altar. 11. Bless, LORD, his substance, and accept the work of his hands: smite through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again.

Moses is large in blessing the tribe of Levi, not so much because it was his own tribe (for he takes no notice of his relation to it) as because it was God's tribe. The blessing of Levi has reference,

1. To the high-priest, here called God's holy one, *ver.* 8. because his office was holy, in token of which, *holiness to the Lord* was written upon his forehead. (1.) He seems to acknowledge, that God might justly have displaced Aaron, and his seed, for his sin at Meribah, *Numb.* xx. 12. So many understand it. It is rather probable to me, that, on the contrary, he pleads with God the zeal and faithfulness of Aaron, and his boldness in stemming the tide of the peoples murmurings at the other Meribah, *Exod.* xvii. 7. which might be very remarkable, and which God might have an eye to in conferring the priesthood upon him, tho' no mention be made of it there. All the Chaldee paraphrasts agree, that it was a trial in which he was *found perfect and faithful, and stood in the trial*; therefore not that, *Numb.* xx. (2.) He prays that the office of the high-priest might ever remain, *Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with him.* It was given him for some eminent piece of service, as appears, *Mal.* ii. 5. Lord, let it never be taken from him. Notwithstanding this blessing the Urim and Thummim was lost in the captivity, and never restored under the second temple: but it has its full accomplishment in Jesus Christ, God's holy one, and our great high-priest, of whom Aaron was a type, with him who had lain in the father's bosom from eternity, the Urim and Thummim shall remain; for he is the wonderful and everlasting counsellor. Some translate the Thummim and Urim appellatively; the rather, because the usual order is here inverted, and here only: Thummim signifies integrity, and Urim, illumination; *Let these be with thy holy one, i. e.* Lord, let the high-priest ever be both an upright man, and an understanding man. A good prayer to be put up for the ministers of the gospel, that they may have clear heads, and honest hearts, light and sincerity make a compleat minister.

2. To the inferior priests and Levites, *ver.* 9, 10, 11. 1. He commends the zeal of this tribe for God, when they sided with Moses (and so with God) against the worshippers of the golden calf, *Exod.* xxxii. 26, &c. and being employed in cutting off the ring-leaders in that wickedness, they did it impartially: the best friends they had in the world, tho' as dear to them as their next relations, they did not spare them, if they were idolaters. Note, Our regard to God, and to his glory, ought always to prevail above our regard to any creature whatsoever. And those who not only keep themselves pure from the common iniquities of the times and places in which they live, but, as they are capable, utter testimony against them, and *stand up for God against the evil-doers*, shall have special marks of honour put upon them. Perhaps, Moses may have an eye to the sons of Korah, who refused to join with their father in his gain-saying, *Numb.* xxvi. 11. Also to Phineas, who *executed judgment*, and *staid the plague*. And indeed, the office of the priests and Levites, which engaged their constant attendance, at least in their turns, at God's altar, laid them under a necessity of being frequently absent from their families, which they could not take such care of, nor make such provision for as other Israelites might. This was the constant self-denial they submitted to, that they might *observe God's word*, and keep the *covenant of priesthood*. Note, Those that are called to minister in holy things must fit loose to the relations and interests that are dearest to them in this world, and prefer the fulfilling of their ministry, before the gratifying of the best friend they have, *Acts* xxi. 13.—xx. 24. Our Lord Jesus knew not his mother and his brethren, when they would have taken him off from his work, *Mat.* xii. 48.

2. He confirms the commission granted this tribe to minister in holy things, which was the recompence of their zeal and fidelity, *ver.* 10. (1.) They were to deal for God with the people. *They shall teach Jacob thy judgments and Israel thy laws*, both as preachers in their religious assemblies, reading and expounding the law, *Neh.* viii. 7, 8. And as judges determining doubtful and difficult cases that were brought before them, 2 *Chron.* xvii. 8, 9. The priests lips kept this knowledge for the use of the people, who were to ask the law at their mouth, *Mal.* ii. 7. Even Haggai, a prophet, consulted the priests in a case of conscience, *Hag.* ii. 12. Note, Preaching is necessary not only for the first planting of churches, but for the preserving and edifying of churches when they are planted. See *Ezek.* xlv. 23, 24. (2.) They were to deal for the people with God, in burning incense to the praise and glory of God, and offering sacrifices to make atonement for sin, and to obtain the divine favour. This was the work of the priests,

priests, but the Levites attended, and assisted in it. Those that would have benefit by their incense and offerings, must diligently and faithfully observe their instructions.

4. He prays for them, *ver. 11.* 1. That God would prosper them in their estates, and make that which was allotted them for their maintenance comfortable to them. *Bless, Lord, his substance.* The provision made for them was very plentiful, and came to them easily, and yet they could have no joy of it unless God blessed it to them, and since God himself was their portion, a particular blessing might be expected to attend that portion. *Bless, Lord, his virtue;* so some read it, Lord, increase thy graces in them, and make them more and more fit for their work. 2. That he would accept them in their services. *Accept the work of his hands,* both for himself, and for the people for whom he ministers. Acceptance with God is that which we should all aim at, and be ambitious of, in all our devotions, whether men accept us or no, *2 Cor. v. 9.* and it is the most valuable blessing we can desire either for our selves or others. 3. That he would take his part against all his enemies, *smite through the loyns of them that rise against him.* He supposeth that God's ministers would have many enemies, some would hate their persons for their faithfulness, and would endeavour to do them a mischief: others would envy them their maintenance, and endeavour sacrilegiously to deprive them of it; others would oppose them in the execution of their office, and not submit to the sentence of the priests; and some would aim to overthrow the office itself. Now he prays that God would blast all such attempts, and return the mischief upon the heads of the authors. This prayer is a prophecy, that God would certainly reckon with those that are enemies to his Ministers, and will keep up a ministry in his church to the end of time, maugre all the designs of the gates of hell against it. Saul rose up against the Lord's priests, *1 Sam. xxii. 18.* and it filled the measure of his sin.

12. ¶ And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by him; and the LORD shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders. 13. ¶ And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the LORD be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, 14. And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, 15. And for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, 16. And for the precious things of the earth, and fulness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush: let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren. 17. His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together, to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh.

Here is, 1. The blessing of Benjamin, *ver. 12.* Benjamin is put next to Levi, because the temple, where the priest's work lay, was just upon the edge of the lot of this tribe; and it is put before Joseph, because of the dignity of Jerusalem (part of which was in this tribe) above Samaria, which was in the tribe of Ephraim, and because Benjamin adhered to the house of David, and to the temple of the Lord, when the rest of the tribes deserted both with Jeroboam. (1.) Benjamin is here called the *beloved of the Lord*, as the father of this tribe was Jacob's beloved son, the *son of his right hand*. Note, Those are blessed indeed that are beloved of the Lord. Saul the first king, and Paul the great apostle, were both of this tribe. (2.) He is here assured of the divine protection, he shall *dwell safely*. Note, Those are safe whom God loves, *Psal. xci. 1.* (3.) It is here intimated, that the temple in which God would dwell should be built in the borders of this tribe. Jerusalem, the holy city, was in the lot of this tribe, *Josh. xviii. 28.* and tho' Sion, the city of David, is supposed to belong to Judah, yet mount Moriah, on which the temple was built, was in Benjamin's lot. God is therefore said to dwell *between his shoulders*, because the temple stood on that mount as the head of a man upon his shoulders. And by this means Benjamin was *covered all the day long* under the protection of the sanctuary, (*Psal. cxxv. 2.*) which is often spoken of as a place of refuge, *Psal. xxvii. 4, 5.* *Neh. vi. 10.* Benjamin dwelling by the temple of God *dwelt in safety by him*. Note, It is a happy thing to be in the neighbourhood of the temple. This situation of Benjamin, it is likely, was the only thing that kept that tribe tight with Judah to the divine institutions, when the other ten tribes apostatized. Those have corrupt and wicked hearts indeed, who the *nearer* they are to the church, are the *further* from God.

2. The blessing of Joseph, including both Manasseh and Ephraim: In Jacob's blessing, *Gen. xlviii.* that of Joseph is the largest, and so it is here: and from thence Moses here borrows the title he gives to Joseph, *ver. 16.* that he was *separated from his brethren*, or, as it might be read, a Nazarite among them, both in regard of his piety wherein it appears by many instances he excelled them all; and of his dignity in Egypt, where he was

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both their ruler and benefactor; his brethren separated him from them by making him a slave, but God distinguished him from them by making him a prince.

Now the blessings here prayed for and prophesied of for this tribe, are great plenty and great power.

1. *Great plenty*, *ver. 13, 14, 15, 16.* In general, *Blessed of the Lord be his land.* They were very fruitful countries that fell into the lot of Ephraim and Manasseh, yet Moses prays they might be watered with the blessing of God, which makes rich, and on which all fruitfulness doth depend. Now, 1. He instanceth in many particulars which he prays may contribute to the wealth and abundance of these two tribes, looking up to the Creator for the benefit and serviceableness of all the inferior creatures, for they are all that to us which he makes them to be. He prays, (1.) For *seasonable rains*, and dews, *the precious things of heaven*, and so precious they are, tho' but fair water, that without them the fruits of the earth would all fail and be cut off. (2.) For *plentiful springs*, which help to make the earth fruitful, called here *the deep that coucheth beneath*; both are the *rivers of God*, *Psal. lxxv. 9.* for he is the Father of the rain, *Job xxxviii. 28.* and he made particularly the *fountains of waters*, *Rev. xiv. 7.* (3.) For the *benign influences* of the heavenly bodies; *ver. 14. for the precious fruits* (the word signifies that which is most excellent, and the best in its kind) *put forth by the quickning heat of the sun*, and the cooling moisture of the moon. Let them have the yearly fruits in their several months, according to the course of nature, in one month olives, in another dates, &c. So some understand it. (4.) For the fruitfulness even of their hills and mountains, which in other countries used to be barren, *ver. 15.* let them have *the chief things of the ancient mountains*, and if the mountains be fruitful, the fruits on them will be first and best ripened: They are called ancient mountains, not because prior in time to other mountains, but because, like the first-born, they were superior in worth and excellency; and lasting hills, not only because as other mountains they were unmoveable, *Hab. iii. 6.* but because the fruitfulness of them should continue. (5.) For the products of the lower grounds, *ver. 16.* *For the precious things of the earth.* Tho' the earth itself seem a useless worthless lump of matter, yet there are precious things produced out of it, for the support and comfort of human life, *Job. xxviii. 5.* *out of it cometh bread*, because out of it came our bodies, and to it they must return: But what are the *precious things of the earth* to a soul that came from God, and must return to him? or what is its fulness to the fulness that is in Christ, whence we receive grace for grace? and some make these precious things here prayed for, to be figures of *spiritual blessings in heavenly things by Christ*, the gifts, graces and comforts of the Spirit.

2. He crowns all with the good will, or favourable acceptance of him that *dwelt in the bush*, *ver. 16. i. e.* of God, that God who appeared to Moses in the bush that burned and was not consumed, (*Exod. iii. 2.*) to give him his commission for the bringing of Israel out of Egypt. Tho' God's glory appeared there but for a while, yet it is said to dwell there, because it continued as long as there was occasion for it: *The good will of the Shechinah in the bush*; so it might be read, for Shechinah signifies *that which dwelleth*: and tho' it was but a little while a dweller in the bush, yet it continued to dwell with the people of Israel. *My dweller in the bush*; so it should be rendred: that was an appearance of the Divine Majesty to Moses only, in token of the particular interest he had in God, which he desires to improve for the good of this tribe. Many a time God had appeared to Moses, but now he is just dying he seems to have the most pleasing remembrance of that which was the first time, when his acquaintance with the visions of the Almighty first began, and his correspondence with heaven was first settled, that was a time of love never to be forgotten. It was at the bush that God declared himself *the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, and so confirmed the promise made to the fathers, that promise which reached as far as the resurrection of the body, and eternal life, as appears by our Saviour's argument from it, *Luke xx. 37.* so that when he prays for the good will of him that *dwelt in the bush*, he has an eye to the covenant then and there renewed, on which all our hopes of God's favour must be bottomed. Now he concludes this large blessing with a prayer for the favour and good-will of God. 1. Because that is the fountain and spring-head of all these blessings, they are the gifts of God's good-will, they are so to his own people, whatever they are to others. Indeed when Ephraim (a descendent from Joseph) slid back from God, *as a back-sliding heifer*, those fruits of his country were so far from being the gifts of God's good-will, that they were intended but to fatten him for the slaughter, *as a lamb in a large place*, *Hos. iv. 16, 17.* 2. Because that is the comfort and sweetness of all these blessings; then we have joy of them when we taste God's good-will in them. 3. Because that is better than all these, infinitely better; for if we have but the favour and good-will of God, we are happy, and may be easy in the want of all these things; and may rejoice in the God of our salvation, *Tho' the fig-tree do not blossom, and there be no fruit in the vine*, *Hab. iii. 17, 18.*

2. Great power Joseph is here blessed with, *ver. 17.* Here are three instances of this power foretold. 1. His authority among his brethren. *His glory is like the firstling of his bullock*, or young bull, which is a stately creature, and therefore formerly used as an emblem

emblem of royal majesty. Joshua that was to succeed Moses was of the tribe of Ephraim the son of Joseph, and his glory was indeed illustrious, and he was an honour to his tribe. In Ephraim was the royal city of the ten tribes afterwards. And of Manasseh were Gideon, Jephtha, and Jair, who were all ornaments and blessings to their country. Some think he is compared to the firstling of the bullock, because the birthright which Reuben lost devolved upon Joseph, 1 Chron. v. 1, 2. and to the firstling of his bullock, because Bashan, which was in the lot of Manasseh, was famous for bulls and cows, Psal. xxii. 12. Amos iv. 1. 2. His force against his enemies, and victory over them; *his horns are like the horn of an unicorn, i. e.* The forces he shall bring into the field shall be very strong and formidable, and *with them he shall push the people, i. e.* He shall overcome all that stand in his way. It appears by the Ephraimites contests both with Gideon, Judg. viii. 1. and with Jephtha, Judg. xii. 1. that they were a warlike tribe, and fierce. Yet we find the children of Ephraim, when they had forsaken the covenant of God, tho' they were armed, turning back in the day of battle, Psal. lxxviii. 9, 10. for tho' here pronounced strong and bold as unicorns, when God was departed from them they became as weak as other men. 3. The numbers of his people, in which Ephraim, tho' the younger house, exceeded, Jacob having in the forefront of the same thing crossed hands, Gen. xlviii. 19. *They are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and the thousands of Manasseh.* Jonathan's Targum applies it to the ten thousands of Canaanites which Joshua conquered, who was of the tribe of Ephraim, and the thousand of Midianites whom Gideon conquered who was of the tribe of Manasseh. And the gloss of the Jerusalem Targum upon the former part of this verse is observable; that as the firstlings of the bullock were never to be worked, nor could the unicorn ever be tamed, so Joseph should ever continue free, and so they had done if they had not by sin sold themselves.

18. ¶ And of Zebulun he said, Rejoyce, Zebulun, in thy going out; and Issachar, in thy tents. 19. They shall call the people unto the mountain, there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness: for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand. 20. ¶ And of Gad he said, Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad: he dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head. 21. And he provided the first part for himself, because there, in a portion of the law-giver was he seated; and he came with the heads of the people, he executed the justice of the LORD, and his judgments with Israel.

Here is, 1. The blessings of Zebulun and Issachar put together, for they were both the sons of Jacob by Leah, and by their lot in Canaan they were neighbours; it is foretold,

1. That they should both have a comfortable settlement and employment, ver. 18. Zebulun must rejoice, for he shall have cause to rejoice; and Moses prays he may have, in his going out, either to war, for Zebulun *jeopardized their lives in the high places of the field*, Judg. v. 18. Or rather to sea, for Zebulun was a *haven of ships*, Gen. xlix. 13. And Issachar must rejoice in his tents, i. e. in his business at home, his husbandry, to which the men of that tribe generally confined themselves, because they saw that rest was good, and when the sea was rough, the land was pleasant, Gen. xlix. 14, 15. Observe here, 1. That the providence of God as it variously appoints the bounds of mens habitations, some in the city, and some in the country, some in the sea-ports, and some in the inland towns, so it wisely disposeth mens inclinations to different employments for the good of the publick, as each member of the body is situated and qualified for the service of the whole. The genius of some men leads them to a book, of others to the sea, of others to the sword; some are inclined to rural affairs, others to trade, and some have mechanick heads; and it is well it is so; *If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing?* 1 Cor. xii. 17. It was for the common good of Israel, that the men of Zebulun were merchants, and that the men of Issachar were husbandmen. 2. That whatever our place and business is, it is our wisdom and duty to accommodate ourselves to it, and it is a great happiness to be well pleased with it. Let Zebulun rejoice in his going out, let him thank God for the gains, and make the best of the losses and inconveniences of his merchandize, and not despise the meanness, or envy the quietness of Issachar's tents; let *Issachar rejoice in his tents*, let him be well pleased with the retirements, and content with the small profits of his country-seat, and not grudge that he has not Zebulun's pleasure of travelling, and profit of trading. Every business has both its conveniences and inconveniences, and therefore whatever providence has made our business we ought to bring our minds to it; and it is really a great happiness whatever our lot is to be easy with it. *This is the gift of God*, Eccl. v. 19.

2. That they should both be serviceable in their places to the honour of God, and the interests of religion in the nation, ver. 19. *They shall call the people to the mountain, i. e.* to the temple which Moses foresaw should be built upon a mountain. I see not why this should be confined (as it is by most interpreters) to Ze-

bulun, if both Zebulun and Issachar receive the comfort of their respective employments, why may we not suppose that they both took care to give God the glory of them? Two things they shall do for God. 1. They shall invite others to his service; *call the people to the mountain.* (1.) Zebulun shall improve his acquaintance and commerce with the neighbour nations, to whom he goes out, for this noble purpose, to propagate religion among them, and to invite them into the service of the God of Israel. Note, Men of great business, or large conversation, should wisely and zealously endeavour to recommend the practice of serious godliness to those with whom they converse, and among whom their business lies. Such are blessed, for they are blessings. It were well if the enlargement of trade with foreign countries might be made to contribute to the spreading of the gospel. This prophecy concerning Zebulun perhaps looks as far as the preaching of Christ and his apostles, which began in the land of Zebulun, Matth. iv. 14, 15. then they *called the people to the mountain, i. e.* to the kingdom of the Messiah, which is called the *mountain of the Lords house*, Isa. ii. 2. (2.) Issachar, that tarries at home, and dwells in tents, shall call upon his neighbours to go up to the sanctuary, at the times appointed for their solemn feasts; either because they should be more zealous and forward than their neighbours, (and it has been often observed, that tho' they that with Zebulun dwell in the havens of ships, which are places of concourse, have commonly more of the light of religion, they that with Issachar dwell in tents in the country, have more of the life and heat of it) and may with their zeal provoke those to a holy emulation, that have more knowledge, Psal. cxxii. 1. Or, because they were more observant of the times appointed for their feasts than others were. One of the Chaldee paraphrasts reads the foregoing verse, *Rejoice, Issachar, in the tents of thy schools*, supposing they would many of them be scholars, and would use their learning for that purpose, according to the revolutions of the year to give notice of the times of the feasts, for almanacks were not then so common as they are now. And Onkelos more particularly, *Rejoice, Issachar, when thou goest to compute the times of the solemnities at Jerusalem*; for then the tribes of Israel shall be gathered to the mountain of the house of the sanctuary. So he reads the beginning of this verse; and many think this the meaning of that character of the men of Issachar in David's time, *That they had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do*, 1 Chron. xii. 32. And the character which follows, ver. 33. of the men of Zebulun, that they were such as went forth to battle, expert in war, perhaps may explain the blessing of that tribe here. Note those that have not opportunity as Zebulun had of bringing into the church those that are without, may yet be very serviceable to its interest, by helping to quicken, encourage, and build up those that are within. And it is good work to call people to God's ordinances, to put those in remembrance that are forgetful, and to stir up those that are slothful; who will follow, but care not to lead.

1. They shall not only invite others to the service of God, but they shall abound in it themselves, *there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness.* They shall not send others to the temple, and stay at home themselves, under pretence that they cannot leave their business, but when they stir up others to go *speedily to pray before the Lord*, they shall say, *we will go also*, as it is Zech. viii. 21. Note, The good we exhort others to we should ourselves be examples of. And when they come to the temple, they shall not appear before the Lord empty, but shall bring for the honour and service of God according as he has prospered them, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. (1.) It is here foretold that both these tribes should grow rich; Zebulun that goes abroad shall *suck of the abundance of the seas* which are full breasts to the merchants, while Issachar that tarries at home shall enrich himself with *treasures hid in the sand*; either the fruits of the earth; or the underground treasures of metals and minerals, or (because the word for sand here signifies properly the sand of the sea) the rich things thrown up by the sea, for the lot of Issachar reached to the sea-side. Perhaps, their success in *calling the people to the mount*, is intimated by their *sucking of the abundance of the seas*, for we have a like phrase used for the bringing in of the nations to the church, Isa. lx. 5. *The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee*, and ver. 16. *Thou shalt suck the milk of the Gentiles.* It is foretold (2.) That these tribes being thus enriched should *consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth*, Mic. iv. 13. That the *merchandise of Zebulun, and the hire of Issachar should be holiness to the Lord*, Isa. xxiii. 18. for they shall out of it *offer sacrifices of righteousness, i. e.* sacrifices according to the law. Note, We must serve and honour God with what we have; and where he sows plentifully he expects to reap accordingly. Those that *suck of the abundance of the seas, and of the treasures hid in the sand*, ought to offer sacrifices of righteousness proportionable.

2. The blessing of the tribe of Gad comes next, ver. 20, 21. This was one of the tribes that was already seated on that side Jordan where Moses now was. Now,

1. He foretels what this tribe would be, ver. 20. 1. That it would be enlarged, as at present it had a spacious allotment: and he gives God the glory both of its present, and of its future extent. *Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad.* We find how this tribe was enlarged by their success in a war, which it seems they carried on very religiously against the Hagarites, 1 Chron. v. 19, 20, 22. Note

Note, God is to have the glory of all our enlargements. 2. That it would be a valiant and victorious tribe; would, if let alone, dwell secure and fearless as a lion; but if provoked, would like a lion *tear the arm with the crown of the head*; i. e. would pull in pieces all that stood in his way, both the arm, that is, the strength, and the crown of the head, that is, the policy and authority of his enemies. In David's time, there were Gadites whose faces were *as the faces of lions*, 1 Chron. xii. 8. Some reckon Jehu to be of this tribe, because the first mention we have of him is at Ramoth Gilead, which belonged to Gad, and they think this may refer to his valiant acts.

2. He commends this tribe for what they had done, and were now doing, *ver. 21.* (1.) They had done wisely for themselves, when they chose their lot with the first, in a country already conquered. *He provided the first part for himself*; tho' he had a concern for his brethren, yet his charity began at home, and he was willing to see himself first served, first settled. The Gadites were the first and most active movers for an allotment on that side Jordan, and therefore are still mentioned before the Reubenites in the history of that affair, *Numb. xxxii. 2.* And thus; while the other tribes had their portion assigned them by Joshua the conqueror, Gad and his companions had theirs from Moses the lawgiver, and in it they were seated by law; or, (as the word is) covered or protected by a special providence which watched over them that were left behind, while the men of war went forward with their brethren. Note, *Men will praise thee when thou dost well for thyself*, when thou providest first for thyself, as Gad did; *Psal. xlix. 18.* And God will praise thee when thou dost well for thy soul, which is indeed thyself, and providest the first part for that, in a portion of the lawgiver. (2.) They were now doing honestly and bravely for their brethren; for they *came with the heads of the people*, before whom they went armed over Jordan, to execute the justice of the Lord upon the Canaanites under the conduct of Joshua, to whom we afterwards find they solemnly vowed obedience, *Josh. i. 12, 16.* This was what they undertook to do, when they had their lot assigned them; *Numb. xxxii. 27.* This they did, *Josh. iv. 12.* And when the wars of Canaan were ended, Joshua dismissed them with a blessing, *Josh. xxii. 7.* Note, It is a blessed and honourable thing to be helpful to our brethren in their affairs; and particularly, to assist in executing the justice of the Lord, by suppressing that which is provoking to him: this was it that was counted to Phineas for righteousness.

22. ¶ And of Dan he said, *Dan is a lions whelp*; he shall leap from Bashan. 23. ¶ And of Naphtali he said, O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the LORD: possess thou the west and the south. 24. ¶ And of Asher he said, *Let Asher be blessed with children*; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil. 25. Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be.

Here is, 1. The blessing of Dan, *ver. 22.* Jacob in his blessing had compared him to a serpent for subtilty, Moses compares him to a lion for courage and resolution: and what could stand before those that had the head of a serpent, and the heart of a lion? He is compared to the lions that leapt from Bashan, a mountain noted for fierce lions, from whence they came down to leap upon their prey in the plains. This may refer either, (1.) To the particular victories obtained by Sampson, (who was of this tribe) over the Philistines, and when *the spirit of the Lord began to move in the camp of Dan*, when he was very young, as a lion's whelp, and who in his attacks upon the Philistines surprized them, and overpowered them by main strength, as a lion doth his prey; and one of his first exploits, was the rending of a lion. Or, (2.) To a more general achievement of that tribe, when a party of them upon information brought them of the security of Laish, which lay in the furthest part of the land of Canaan from them, surprized it, and soon made themselves masters of it. See *Judg. xviii. 24.* And the mountains of Bashan lying not far from that city, probably from thence they made their descent upon it; and therefore are here said to leap from Bashan.

2. The blessing of Naphtali, *ver. 23.* He looks upon this tribe with wonder and applauds it. O Naphtali thou art happy, thou shalt be so, mayest thou be ever so! Three things make up the happiness of this tribe. 1. Be thou *satisfied with favour*. Some understand it of the favour of men, their good-will, and good-word; Jacob had described this tribe to be generally courteous obliging people, giving goodly words, as the loving hind, *Gen. xlix. 21.* Now what should they get by being so? Moses here tells them they should have an interest in the affections of their neighbours, and be satisfied with favour. They that are loving shall be beloved. But others understand it of the favour of God; and with good reason: for that only is the favour that is satisfying to the soul, and puts true gladness into the heart. Those are happy indeed, that have the favour of God; and those shall have it, that place their satisfaction in it, and reckon in having that, they have enough, and desire no more. 2. Be thou *full with the blessing of the Lord*, i. e. not only with those good things that

are the fruits of the blessing, corn, and wine, and oil, but with the blessing it self; i. e. the grace of God, according to his promise and covenant. Those that have that blessing, may well reckon themselves full, they need nothing else to make them happy. The portion of the tribe of Naphtali (the Jews say) was so fruitful, and the product so forward, tho' it lay north, that they of that tribe, were generally the first that brought their first-fruits to the temple; and so, they had first the blessing from the priest, which was the blessing of the Lord. Capernaum, in which Christ chiefly resided, lay in this tribe. 3. Be thou in possession of the sea and the south; so it may be read, i. e. of that sea which shall lie south of thy lot, that was the sea of Galilee; which we so often read of in the gospels, directly north of which the lot of this tribe lay; and which was of great advantage to this tribe, witness the wealth of Capernaum and Bethsaida, which lay within this tribe, and upon the shore of that sea. See how Moses was guided by a spirit of prophecy in these blessings; for before the lot was cast into the lap, he foresaw and foretold how the disposal of it would be.

3. The blessing of Asher, *ver. 24, 25.* Four things he prays for, and prophesieth concerning this tribe, which carries blessedness in its name; for Leah called the father of it Asher, saying, *Happy am I*, Gen. xxx. 13. 1. The increase of their numbers. They were now a numerous tribe, *Numb. xxvi. 47.* Let it be more so; *Let Asher be blessed with children*. Note, Children, especially children of the covenant, are blessings, not burthens. 2. Their interest in their neighbours; *Let him be acceptable to his brethren*. Note, It is a very desirable thing to have the love and good-will of those we live among: it is what we should pray to God for, who has all hearts in his hand; and what we should endeavour to gain by meekness and humility, and a readiness, as we have ability and opportunity, to do good to all men. 3. The richness of their land. (1.) Above-ground; *Let him dip his foot in oil*, i. e. Let him have such plenty of it in his lot, that he may not only anoint his head with it, but, if he pleases, wash his feet in it, which was not commonly done; yet we find our blessed Saviour so acceptable to his brethren, that his feet were anointed with the most precious ointment, Luke vii. 46. (2.) Under-ground; *Thy shoes shall be iron and brass*, i. e. Thou shalt have great plenty of these metals (mines of them) in thy own ground, which by an uncommon blessing shall have both its surface and its bowels rich: or, if they had them not, products of their own country, they should have them imported from abroad; for the lot of this tribe lay on the sea-coast. The Chaldee paraphrasts understand it figuratively; thou shalt be strong and bright, as iron and brass. 4. The continuance of their strength and vigour; *as thy days, so shall thy strength be*. Many paraphrase it thus, The strength of thy old-age shall be like that of thy youth; thou shalt not feel a decay, nor be the worse for the wearing, but shalt renew thy youth; as if not thy shoes only, but thy bones were iron and brass. The day is often in scripture put for the events of the day; and taking it so here, it is a promise that God would graciously support them under their trials and troubles, whatever they were. And so it is a promise sure to all the spiritual seed of Abraham, that God will wisely proportion their graces and comforts to the services and sufferings he calls them out to. Have they work appointed them? they shall have strength to do it. Have they burthens appointed them? they shall have strength to bear them; and never be tempted above that they are able. Faithful is he that has thus promised, and hath caused us to hope in this promise.

26. ¶ There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. 27. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, Destroy them. 28. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine, also his heaven shall drop down dew. 29. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places.

These are the last words of all that ever Moses, that great writer, that great dictator, either wrote himself, or were written from him, and they are therefore very remarkable; and no doubt, we shall find them very improvable. Moses, the man of God, (who had as much reason as ever any meer man had to know both) with his last breath magnifies both the God of Israel, and the Israel of God. They are both incomparable in his eye; and we are sure in this his judgment of both, his eye did not wax dim.

1. No God like the God of Israel: None of the gods of the nations were capable of doing that for their worshippers which Jehovah did for his, *ver. 26.* There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun. Note, When we are expecting that God should bless us in doing well for us, we must bless him by speaking well of him:

emblem of royal majesty. Joshua that was to succeed Moses was of the tribe of Ephraim the son of Joseph, and his glory was indeed illustrious, and he was an honour to his tribe. In Ephraim was the royal city of the ten tribes afterwards. And of Manasseh were Gideon, Jephtha, and Jair, who were all ornaments and blessings to their country. Some think he is compared to the firstling of the bullock, because the birthright which Reuben lost devolved upon Joseph, 1 Chron. v. 1, 2. and to the firstling of his bullock, because Bashan, which was in the lot of Manasseh, was famous for bulls and cows, Psal. xxii. 12. Amos iv. 1. 2. His force against his enemies, and victory over them; *his horns are like the horn of an unicorn, i. e.* The forces he shall bring into the field shall be very strong and formidable, and *with them he shall push the people, i. e.* He shall overcome all that stand in his way. It appears by the Ephraimites contests both with Gideon, Judg. viii. 1. and with Jephtha, Judg. xii. 1. that they were a warlike tribe, and fierce. Yet we find the children of Ephraim, when they had forsaken the covenant of God, tho' they were armed, *turning back in the day of battle*, Psal. lxxviii. 9, 10. for tho' here pronounced *strong and bold as unicorns*, when God was departed from them they became as weak as other men. 3. The numbers of his people, in which Ephraim, tho' the younger house, exceeded, Jacob having in the forefront of the same thing crossed hands, Gen. xlviii. 19. *They are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and the thousands of Manasseh.* Jonathan's Targum applies it to the ten thousands of Canaanites which Joshua conquered, who was of the tribe of Ephraim, and the thousand of Midianites whom Gideon conquered who was of the tribe of Manasseh. And the gloss of the Jerusalem Targum upon the former part of this verse is observable; that as the firstlings of the bullock were never to be worked, nor could the unicorn ever be tamed, so Joseph should ever continue free, and so they had done if they had not by sin sold themselves.

18. ¶ And of Zebulun he said, Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out; and Issachar, in thy tents. 19. They shall call the people unto the mountain, there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness: for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand. 20. ¶ And of Gad he said, Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad: he dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head. 21. And he provided the first part for himself, because there, in a portion of the law-giver *was he seated*; and he came with the heads of the people, he executed the justice of the LORD, and his judgments with Israel.

Here is, 1. The blessings of Zebulun and Issachar put together, for they were both the sons of Jacob by Leah, and by their lot in Canaan they were neighbours; it is foretold,

1. That they should both have a comfortable settlement and employment, ver. 18. Zebulun must rejoice, for he shall have cause to rejoice; and Moses prays he may have, in his going out, either to war, for *Zebulun jeopardized their lives in the high places of the field*, Judg. v. 18. Or rather to sea, for Zebulun was a *haven of ships*, Gen. xlix. 13. And Issachar must rejoice in his tents, *i. e.* in his business at home, his husbandry, to which the men of that tribe generally confined themselves, because they saw that rest was good, and when the sea was rough, the land was pleasant, Gen. xlix. 14, 15. Observe here, 1. That the providence of God as it variously appoints the bounds of mens habitations, some in the city, and some in the country, some in the sea-ports, and some in the inland towns, so it wisely disposeth mens inclinations to different employments for the good of the publick, as each member of the body is situated and qualified for the service of the whole. The genius of some men leads them to a book, of others to the sea, of others to the sword; some are inclined to rural affairs, others to trade, and some have mechanick heads; and it is well it is so; *If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing?* 1 Cor. xii. 17. It was for the common good of Israel, that the men of Zebulun were merchants, and that the men of Issachar were husbandmen. 2. That whatever our place and business is, it is our wisdom and duty to accommodate ourselves to it, and it is a great happiness to be well pleased with it. Let Zebulun rejoice in his going out, let him thank God for the gains, and make the best of the losses and inconveniences of his merchandize, and not despise the meanness, or envy the quietness of Issachar's tents; let *Issachar rejoice in his tents*, let him be well pleased with the retirements, and content with the small profits of his country-seat, and not grudge that he has not Zebulun's pleasure of travelling, and profit of trading. Every business has both its conveniences and inconveniences, and therefore whatever providence has made our business we ought to bring our minds to it; and it is really a great happiness whatever our lot is to be easy with it. *This is the gift of God*, Eccl. v. 19.

2. That they should both be serviceable in their places to the honour of God, and the interests of religion in the nation, ver. 19. *They shall call the people to the mountain, i. e.* to the temple which Moses foresaw should be built upon a mountain. I see not why this should be confined (as it is by most interpreters) to Ze-

bulun, if both Zebulun and Issachar receive the comfort of their respective employments, why may we not suppose that they both took care to give God the glory of them? Two things they shall do for God. 1. They shall invite others to his service; *call the people to the mountain.* (1.) Zebulun shall improve his acquaintance and commerce with the neighbour nations, to whom he goes out, for this noble purpose, to propagate religion among them, and to invite them into the service of the God of Israel. Note, Men of great business, or large conversation, should wisely and zealously endeavour to recommend the practice of serious godliness to those with whom they converse, and among whom their business lies. Such are blessed, for they are blessings. It were well if the enlargement of trade with foreign countries might be made to contribute to the spreading of the gospel. This prophecy concerning Zebulun perhaps looks as far as the preaching of Christ and his apostles, which began in the land of Zebulun, Matth. iv. 14, 15. then they *called the people to the mountain, i. e.* to the kingdom of the Messiah, which is called the *mountain of the Lords house*, Isa. ii. 2. (2.) Issachar, that tarries at home, and dwells in tents, shall call upon his neighbours to go up to the sanctuary, at the times appointed for their solemn feasts; either because they should be more zealous and forward than their neighbours, (and it has been often observed, that tho' they that with Zebulun dwell in the havens of ships, which are places of concourse, have commonly more of the light of religion, they that with Issachar dwell in tents in the country, have more of the life and heat of it) and may with their zeal provoke those to a holy emulation, that have more knowledge, Psal. cxxii. 1. Or, because they were more observant of the times appointed for their feasts than others were. One of the Chaldee paraphrasts reads the foregoing verse, *Rejoice, Issachar, in the tents of thy schools*, supposing they would many of them be scholars, and would use their learning for that purpose, according to the revolutions of the year to give notice of the times of the feasts, for almanacks were not then so common as they are now. And Onkelos more particularly, *Rejoice, Issachar, when thou goest to compute the times of the solemnities at Jerusalem*; for then the tribes of Israel shall be gathered to the mountain of the house of the sanctuary. So he reads the beginning of this verse; and many think this the meaning of that character of the men of Issachar in David's time, *That they had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do*, 1 Chron. xii. 32. And the character which follows, ver. 33. of the men of Zebulun, that they were such as went forth to battle, expert in war, perhaps may explain the blessing of that tribe here. Note those that have not opportunity as Zebulun had of bringing into the church those that are without, may yet be very serviceable to its interest, by helping to quicken, encourage, and build up those that are within. And it is good work to call people to God's ordinances, to put those in remembrance that are forgetful, and to stir up those that are slothful; who will follow, but care not to lead.

1. They shall not only invite others to the service of God, but they shall abound in it themselves, *there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness.* They shall not send others to the temple, and stay at home themselves, under pretence that they cannot leave their business, but when they stir up others to go *speedily to pray before the Lord*, they shall say, *we will go also*, as it is Zech. viii. 21. Note, The good we exhort others to we should ourselves be examples of. And when they come to the temple, they shall not appear before the Lord empty, but shall bring for the honour and service of God according as he has prospered them, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. (1.) It is here foretold that both these tribes should grow rich; Zebulun that goes abroad shall *suck of the abundance of the seas* which are full breasts to the merchants, while Issachar that tarries at home shall enrich himself with *treasures hid in the sand*; either the fruits of the earth; or the underground treasures of metals and minerals, or (because the word for sand here signifies properly the sand of the sea) the rich things thrown up by the sea, for the lot of Issachar reached to the sea-side. Perhaps, their success in *calling the people to the mount*, is intimated by their *sucking of the abundance of the seas*, for we have a like phrase used for the bringing in of the nations to the church, Isa. lx. 5. *The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee*, and ver. 16. *Thou shalt suck the milk of the Gentiles.* It is foretold (2.) That these tribes being thus enriched should *consecrate their gain unto the Lord*, and their substance *unto the Lord of the whole earth*, Mic. iv. 13. That the *merchandize of Zebulun*, and the *hire of Issachar* should be *holiness to the Lord*, Isa. xxiii. 18. for they shall out of it *offer sacrifices of righteousness, i. e.* sacrifices according to the law. Note, We must serve and honour God with what we have; and where he sows plentifully he expects to reap accordingly. Those that *suck of the abundance of the seas*, and of the *treasures hid in the sand*, ought to offer sacrifices of righteousness proportionable.

2. The blessing of the tribe of Gad comes next, ver. 20, 21. This was one of the tribes that was already seated on that side Jordan where Moses now was. Now,

1. He foretels what this tribe would be, ver. 20. 1. That it would be enlarged, as at present it had a spacious allotment: and he gives God the glory both of its present, and of its future extent. *Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad.* We find how this tribe was enlarged by their success in a war, which it seems they carried on very religiously against the Hagarites, 1 Chron. v. 19, 20, 22. Note

Note, God is to have the glory of all our enlargements. 2. That it would be a valiant and victorious tribe; would, if let alone, dwell secure and fearless as a lion; but if provoked, would like a lion *tear the arm with the crown of the head*; i. e. would pull in pieces all that stood in his way, both the arm, that is, the strength, and the crown of the head, that is, the policy and authority of his enemies. In David's time, there were Gadites whose faces were *as the faces of lions*, 1 Chron. xii. 8. Some reckon Jehu to be of this tribe, because the first mention we have of him is at Ramoth Gilead, which belonged to Gad, and they think this may refer to his valiant acts.

2. He commends this tribe for what they had done, and were now doing, *ver. 21.* (1.) They had done wisely for themselves, when they chose their lot with the first, in a country already conquered. *He provided the first part for himself*; tho' he had a concern for his brethren, yet his charity began at home, and he was willing to see himself first served, first settled. The Gadites were the first and most active movers for an allotment on that side Jordan, and therefore are still mentioned before the Reubenites in the history of that affair, *Numb. xxxii. 2.* And thus, while the other tribes had their portion assigned them by Joshua the conqueror, Gad and his companions had theirs from Moses the lawgiver, and in it they were seated by law; or, (as the word is) covered or protected by a special providence which watched over them that were left behind, while the men of war went forward with their brethren. Note, *Men will praise thee when thou doest well for thyself*, when thou providest first for thyself, as Gad did; *Psal. xlix. 18.* And God will praise thee when thou doest well for thy soul, which is indeed thyself, and providest the first part for that, in a portion of the lawgiver. (2.) They were now doing honestly and bravely for their brethren, for they *came with the heads of the people*, before whom they went armed over Jordan, to execute the justice of the Lord upon the Canaanites under the conduct of Joshua, to whom we afterwards find they solemnly vowed obedience, *Josh. i. 12, 16.* This was what they undertook to do, when they had their lot assigned them; *Numb. xxxii. 27.* This they did, *Josh. iv. 12.* And when the wars of Canaan were ended, Joshua dismissed them with a blessing, *Josh. xxii. 7.* Note, It is a blessed and honourable thing to be helpful to our brethren in their affairs; and particularly, to assist in executing the justice of the Lord, by suppressing that which is provoking to him: this was it that was counted to Phineas for righteousness.

22. ¶ And of Dan he said, *Dan is a lions whelp*; he shall leap from Bashan. 23. ¶ And of Naphtali he said, O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the LORD: possess thou the west and the south. 24. ¶ And of Asher he said, *Let Asher be blessed with children*; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil. 25. *Thy shoes shall be iron and brass*; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be.

Here is, 1. The blessing of Dan, *ver. 22.* Jacob in his blessing had compared him to a serpent for subtilty, Moses compares him to a lion for courage and resolution: and what could stand before those that had the head of a serpent, and the heart of a lion? He is compared to the lions that leapt from Bashan, a mountain noted for fierce lions, from whence they came down to leap upon their prey in the plains. This may refer either, (1.) To the particular victories obtained by Sampson, (who was of this tribe) over the Philistines, and when the spirit of the Lord began to move in the camp of Dan, when he was very young, as a lion's whelp, and who in his attacks upon the Philistines surprized them, and overpowered them by main strength, as a lion doth his prey; and one of his first exploits, was the rending of a lion. Or, (2.) To a more general achievement of that tribe, when a party of them upon information brought them of the security of Laish, which lay in the furthest part of the land of Canaan from them, surprized it, and soon made themselves masters of it. See *Judg. xviii. 24.* And the mountains of Bashan lying not far from that city, probably from thence they made their descent upon it; and therefore are here said to leap from Bashan.

2. The blessing of Naphtali, *ver. 23.* He looks upon this tribe with wonder and applauds it. O Naphtali thou art happy, thou shalt be so, mayest thou be ever so! Three things make up the happiness of this tribe. 1. Be thou *satisfied with favour*. Some understand it of the favour of men, their good-will, and good-word; Jacob had described this tribe to be generally courteous obliging people, giving goodly words, as the loving hind, *Gen. xlix. 21.* Now what should they get by being so? Moses here tells them they should have an interest in the affections of their neighbours, and be satisfied with favour. They that are loving shall be beloved. But others understand it of the favour of God; and with good reason: for that only is the favour that is satisfying to the soul, and puts true gladness into the heart. Those are happy indeed, that have the favour of God; and those shall have it, that place their satisfaction in it, and reckon in having that, they have enough, and desire no more. 2. Be thou *full with the blessing of the Lord*, i. e. not only with those good things that

are the fruits of the blessing, corn, and wine, and oil, but with the blessing it self; i. e. the grace of God, according to his promise and covenant. Those that have that blessing, may well reckon themselves full, they need nothing else to make them happy. The portion of the tribe of Naphtali (the Jews say) was so fruitful, and the product so forward, tho' it lay north, that they of that tribe, were generally the first that brought their first-fruits to the temple; and so, they had first the blessing from the priest, which was the blessing of the Lord. Capernaum, in which Christ chiefly resided, lay in this tribe. 3. Be thou in possession of the sea and the south; so it may be read, i. e. of that sea which shall lie south of thy lot, that was the sea of Galilee; which we so often read of in the gospels, directly north of which the lot of this tribe lay; and which was of great advantage to this tribe, witness the wealth of Capernaum and Bethsaida, which lay within this tribe, and upon the shore of that sea. See how Moses was guided by a spirit of prophecy in these blessings; for before the lot was cast into the lap, he foresaw and foretold how the disposal of it would be.

3. The blessing of Asher, *ver. 24, 25.* Four things he prays for, and prophesieth concerning this tribe, which carries blessedness in its name; for Leah called the father of it Asher, saying, *Happy am I*, *Gen. xxx. 13.* 1. The increase of their numbers. They were now a numerous tribe, *Numb. xxvi. 47.* Let it be more so; *Let Asher be blessed with children.* Note, Children, especially children of the covenant, are blessings, not burthens. 2. Their interest in their neighbours; *Let him be acceptable to his brethren.* Note, It is a very desirable thing to have the love and good-will of those we live among: it is what we should pray to God for, who has all hearts in his hand; and what we should endeavour to gain by meekness and humility, and a readiness, as we have ability and opportunity, to do good to all men. 3. The richness of their land. (1.) Above-ground; *Let him dip his foot in oil*, i. e. Let him have such plenty of it in his lot, that he may not only anoint his head with it, but, if he pleases, wash his feet in it, which was not commonly done; yet we find our blessed Saviour so acceptable to his brethren, that his feet were anointed with the most precious ointment, *Luke vii. 46.* (2.) Under-ground; *Thy shoes shall be iron and brass*, i. e. Thou shalt have great plenty of these metals (mines of them) in thy own ground, which by an uncommon blessing shall have both its surface and its bowels rich: or, if they had them not, products of their own country, they should have them imported from abroad; for the lot of this tribe lay on the sea-coast. The Chaldee paraphrasts understand it figuratively; thou shalt be strong and bright, as iron and brass. 4. The continuance of their strength and vigour; *as thy days, so shall thy strength be.* Many paraphrase it thus, The strength of thy old-age shall be like that of thy youth; thou shalt not feel a decay, nor be the worse for the wearing, but shalt renew thy youth; as if not thy shoes only, but thy bones were iron and brass. The day is often in scripture put for the events of the day; and taking it so here, it is a promise that God would graciously support them under their trials and troubles, whatever they were. And so it is a promise sure to all the spiritual seed of Abraham, that God will wisely proportion their graces and comforts to the services and sufferings he calls them out to. Have they work appointed them? they shall have strength to do it. Have they burthens appointed them? they shall have strength to bear them; and never be tempted above that they are able. Faithful is he that has thus promised, and hath caused us to hope in this promise.

26. ¶ There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. 27. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, Destroy them. 28. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine, also his heaven shall drop down dew. 29. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places.

These are the last words of all that ever Moses, that great writer, that great dictator, either wrote himself, or were written from him, and they are therefore very remarkable; and no doubt, we shall find them very improvable. Moses, the man of God, (who had as much reason as ever any meer man had to know both) with his last breath magnifies both the God of Israel, and the Israel of God. They are both incomparable in his eye; and we are sure in this his judgment of both, his eye did not wax dim.

1. No God like the God of Israel: None of the gods of the nations were capable of doing that for their worshippers which Jehovah did for his, *ver. 26.* There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun. Note, When we are expecting that God should bless us in doing well for us, we must bless him by speaking well of him:

him: and one of the most awful ways of praising God, is, by acknowledging that there is none like him. Now, 1. This was the honour of Israel; every nation boasted of its god, but none had such a God to boast in as Israel had. (2.) It was their happiness, that they were taken into covenant with such a God. Two things he takes notice of as proofs of the incontestible preeminence of the God of Jeshurun above all other gods. 1. His sovereign power and authority; *he rides upon the heavens*, and with the greatest state and magnificence on the skies. *Riding on the heavens* notes his greatness and glory, in which he manifests himself to the upper world, and the use he makes of the influences of heaven, and the products of the clouds in bringing to pass his own counsels in this lower world: he manages and directs them as a man doth the horse he rides on. When he has any thing to do for his people, he *rides upon the heavens* to do it; for he doth it swiftly and strongly, no enemy can either anticipate or obstruct the progress of him that rides on the heavens. 2. His boundless eternity; he is the eternal God, and his arms are *everlasting*, ver. 27. The gods of the heathen were but lately invented, and would shortly perish; but the God of Jeshurun is eternal, he was before all worlds, and will be when time and days shall be no more. See *Hab. i. 12*.

2. No people like the Israel of God. Having pronounced each tribe happy, in the close he pronounces all together very happy; so happy in all respects, that there was no nation under the sun comparable to them, *ver. 29. Happy art thou, O Israel, a people whose God is the Lord; on that account truly happy, and none like unto thee.* If Israel honour God as a non-such God, he will favour them, so as to make them a non-such people, the envy of all their neighbours, and the joy of all their well-wishers. *Who is like unto thee, O people? behold, thou art fair, my love!* saith Christ of his spouse: To which she presently returns, *Behold, thou art fair, my beloved.* *What one nation,* (no not all the nations together) *is like thy people Israel?* 2 Sam. vii. 23. What is here said of the church of Israel, and the honours and privileges of it, is certainly to be applied to *the church of the first-born*, that are written in heaven: The Christian church is the Israel of God, as the apostle calls it, *Gal. vi. 16.* on which there shall be peace, and which is dignified above all societies in the world, as Israel was.

1. Never was people so well seated, and sheltered, *ver. 27. The eternal God is thy refuge:* Or, as the word signifies, *thy habitation or mansion-house*, in whom thou art safe and easy, and at rest, as a man in his own house. Every Israelite indeed, is at home in God; the soul returns to him, and reposeth in him as its resting-place, *Psal. cxvi. 7.* its hiding-place, *Psal. xxxii. 7.* And they that make him their habitation, shall have all the comforts and benefits of a habitation in him, *Psal. xci. 1.* Moses had an eye to God as the habitation of Israel, when they were wandering in the wilderness, *Psal. xc. 1. Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.* And now they were going to settle in Canaan, they must not change their habitation; still they will need, and still they shall have, the eternal God for their dwelling-place, and without him Canaan itself would be a wilderness, and a land of darkness.

2. Never was people so well supported, and born up; *underneath are the everlasting arms, i. e.* the almighty power of God is engaged for the protection and consolation of all that trust in him, in their greatest straits and distresses, and under their heaviest burthens. The everlasting arms shall support, (1.) The interests of the church in general, that they shall not sink or be run down; underneath the church is that rock of ages on which it is built, and against which the gates of hell shall never prevail, *Matth. xvi. 18.* (2.) The spirits of particular believers, so that tho' they may be oppressed, they shall not be overwhelmed by any trouble. How low soever the people of God are at any time brought, everlasting arms are underneath them to keep the spirit from sinking, from fainting, and the faith from failing, even when they are pressed above measure. The everlasting covenant, and the everlasting consolations that flow from it, are indeed everlasting arms, with which believers have been wonderfully sustained, and kept cheerful in the worst of times; divine grace is sufficient for them, *2 Cor. xii. 9.*

3. Never was people so well commanded and led on to battle; *He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee* by his almighty power which will make room for thee, and by a commission which will bear thee out, he shall say, *Destroy them.* They were now entering upon a land that was in the full possession of a strong and formidable people, and who being its first planters, looked upon themselves as its rightful owners; how shall Israel justify, and how shall they accomplish, the expulsion of them? (1.) God will give them a commission to destroy the Canaanites, and that will justify them, and bear them out in it, against all the world. He that is sovereign Lord of all lives and all lands, not only allowed and permitted, but expressly commanded and appointed the children of Israel both to take possession of the land of Canaan, and to put to the sword the people of Canaan, which being thus authorized they might not only lawfully, but honourably do, without incurring the least stain, or imputation of theft by the one, or murder by the other. (2.) God will give them power and ability to destroy them; nay, he will in effect do it to their

hands: he will *thrust out the enemy from before them*; for the very fear of Israel shall put them to flight. God *drove out the heathen to plant his people*, *Psal. xlv. 2.* Thus believers are more than conquerors over their spiritual enemies, through Christ that loved them. The captain of our salvation *thrust out the enemy from before us*, when he overcame the world, and spoiled principalities and powers on the cross: and the word of command to us, is, *Destroy them*; pursue the victory, and you shall divide the spoil.

4. Never was people so well secured, and protected, *ver. 28. Israel shall then dwell in safety alone.* Those that dwell in God, and make his name their strong tower, *dwell in safety*; the *place of their defence is the munitions of rocks*, *Isa. xxxiii. 16.* They shall dwell in safety alone. (1.) *Though alone*; tho' they contract no alliances with their neighbours, nor have any reason to expect help or succour from any of them, yet they shall dwell in safety; they shall really be safe, and they shall think themselves so. (2.) *Because alone*; they shall dwell in safety, as long as they continue pure, and unmixed with the heathen, a singular and peculiar people. Their distinction from other nations, tho' it made them like a speckled bird, *Jer. xii. 9.* and exposed them to the ill-will of those about them, yet it was really their preservation from the mischief their neighbours wished them, as it kept them under the divine protection. All that keep close to God, shall be kept safe by him. It is promised, that in the kingdom of Christ *Israel shall dwell safely*, *Jer. xxiii. 6.*

5. Never was people so well provided for; the fountain of Jacob, *i. e.* the present generation of that people, which is as the fountain to all the streams that shall hereafter descend and be derived from it, shall now presently be fixed upon a good land. *The eye of Jacob* (so it might be read, for the same word signifies a fountain and an eye) *is upon the land of corn and wine, i. e.* where they now lay encamped, they had Canaan in their eye, it was just before their faces, on the other side the river, and they would have it in their hands, and under their feet quickly. This land they had their eye upon was blessed both with the fatness of the earth, and the dew of heaven; it was a *land of corn and wine*, substantial and useful products: also his heavens (as if the heavens were particularly designed to be blessings to that land) *shall drop down dew*, without which, tho' the soil were never so good, the corn and wine would soon fail. Every Israelite indeed has his eye, the eye of faith, upon the better country; the heavenly Canaan, which is richly replenished with better things than corn and wine.

6. Never was people so well helped; if they were in any strait, God himself rode upon the heavens for their help, *ver. 26.* And they were a people saved by the Lord, *ver. 29.* If they were in danger of any harm, or in want of any good, they had an eternal God to go to, an almighty power to trust to; nothing could hurt those whom God helped, nor was it possible that people should perish, which was saved by the Lord. They that are added to the gospel Israel, are such as shall be saved, *Acts ii. 47.*

7. Never was people so well armed; God himself was the shield of their help, by whom they were armed defensively, and sufficiently guarded against all assailants: and he was the sword of their excellency, by whom they were armed offensively, and made both formidable and successful in all their wars. God is called the sword of their excellency, because, in fighting for them, he made them to excel other people: or, because in all he did for them, he had an eye to his sanctuary among them, which is called the excellency of Jacob, *Psal. xlvii. 4. Ezek. xxiv. 21. Amos vi. 8.* Those in whose hearts is the excellency of holiness, have God himself for their shield and sword, are defended by the whole armour of God; his word is their sword, and faith in it is their shield, *Eph. vi. 16, 17.*

8. Never was people so well assured of victory over their enemies; *They shall be found liars unto thee; i. e.* shall be forced to submit to thee fore against their will, so that it will be but a counterfeit submission; yet the point shall be gained, for thou shalt tread upon their necks, (so the LXX) which we find done, *Jesh. x. 24.* Thou shalt tread down their strong-holds, be they never so high; and trample upon their palaces and temples, tho' esteemed never so sacred. *If thine enemies be found liars unto thee,* (so some read it) *Thou shalt tread upon their high-places*; if they will not be held by the bonds of leagues and treaties, they shall be broken by the force of war. Thus shall the God of peace tread Satan under the feet of all believers, and shall do it shortly, *Rom. xvi. 20.*

Now lay all this together, and then you will say, *Happy art thou, O Israel! Who is like unto thee, O people?* Thrice happy the people, whose God is the Lord.

C H A P. XXXIV.

Having read how Moses finished his testimony, we are told how he immediately after finished his life. This chapter could not be written by Moses himself, but was added by Joshua or Eleazar, or, as bishop Patrick conjectures, by Samuel, who was a prophet, and wrote by divine authority what he found in the records of Joshua, and his successors the judges. We have had an account of his dying words, here we have an account of his dying work, and that is work we must all do shortly, and it had need be well done.

done. Here is, 1. *The view Moses had of the land of Canaan just before he died*, ver. 1—4. 2. *His death and burial*, ver. 5, 6. 3. *His age*, ver. 7. 4. *Israel's mourning for him*, ver. 8. 5. *His successor*, ver. 9. 6. *His character*, ver. 10—12.

1. **A**ND Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho: and the LORD shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan. 2. And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, 3. And the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm-trees, unto Zoar. 4. And the LORD said unto him, This is the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.

Here is, 1. Moses climbing upwards towards heaven, as high as the top of Pisgah, there to die, for that was the place appointed, chap. xxxii. 49, 50. Israel lay encamped upon the flat grounds in the plains of Moab, and from thence these went up according to order to the mountain of Nebo; to the highest point or ridge of that mountain which was called Pisgah, ver. 1. Pisgah is an appellative name for all such pikes. It should seem Moses went up alone to the top of Pisgah; alone without help; a sign that his natural force was not abated, when on the last day of his life he could walk up to the top of a high hill, without such supporters as once he had when his hands were heavy, *Exod. xvii. 12.* Alone without company; when he had made an end of blessing Israel, we may suppose he solemnly took leave of Joshua and Eleazar, and the rest of his friends, who probably brought him to the foot of the hill, but then he gave them such a charge as Abraham gave to his servants at the foot of another hill; *Tarry ye here while I go yonder and die*; they must not see him die, because they must not know of his sepulchre. But whether this were so or no, he went up to the top of Pisgah, (1.) To shew that he was willing to die; when he knew the place of his death he was so far from declining it, that he cheerfully mounted a steep hill to come at it. Note, Those that through grace are well acquainted with another world, and have been much conversant with it, need not be afraid to leave this. (2.) To shew that he looked upon death as his ascension. The soul of a man, of a good man, when it leaves the body *goes upward*, *Eccl. iii. 21.* in conformity to which motion of the soul, the body of Moses shall go along with it as far upwards as its earth will carry it. When God's servants are sent for out of the world, the summons runs thus, *Go up and die.*

2. Moses looking downward again towards this earth, to see the earthly Canaan into which he must never enter, but therein by faith looking forwards to the heavenly Canaan into which he should now presently enter. God had threatened that he should not come into the possession of Canaan, and the threatening is fulfilled: But he had also promised that he should have a prospect of it, and the promise is here performed, *The Lord shewed him all that good land*, ver. 1.

1. If he went up alone to the top of Pisgah, yet he *was not alone*, for the Father was with him, *Joh. xvi. 32.* If a man has any friends he will have them about him when he lies a dying. But if, either through God's providence, or their unkindness, it should so happen, that we should then be alone, we need *fear no evil*, if the great and good shepherd be with us, *Psal. xxiii. 4.*

2. Tho' his sight was very good, and he had all the advantage of high ground he could desire for the prospect, yet he could not have seen what he now saw, all Canaan from end to end, (reckoned about 160 miles) and from side to side (reckoned about 50 or 60 miles) if his sight had not been miraculously assisted and enlarged, and therefore it is said, *The Lord shewed it him.* Note, All the pleasant prospects we have of the better country we are beholden to the grace of God for; it is he that gives the *Spirit of Wisdom* as well as the *Spirit of Revelation*, the eye as well as the object. This sight God here gave Moses of Canaan, probably, the devil designed to mimic and pretended to out-do, when in an airy phantom he shewed to our Saviour, whom he had placed like Moses, upon an *exceeding high mountain*, all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, not gradually, as here, first one country and then another, but all in a moment of time.

3. He saw it at a distance; such a sight the Old Testament saints had of the kingdom of the Messiah, they *saw it afar off*, thus Abraham long before this saw Christ's day; and being fully persuaded of it, embraced it in the promise leaving others to embrace it in the performance, *Heb. xi. 13.* Such a sight believers now have through grace of the bliss and glory of their future state. The word and ordinances are to them what mount Pisgah was to Moses, from them they have comfortable prospects of the glory to be revealed, and rejoice in hope of it.

4. He saw it, but must never enjoy it. As God sometimes takes his people away from the *evil to come*, so at other times he takes them away from the *good to come*, to the church in this world. Glorious things are spoken of the kingdom of Christ in the latter days, its advancement, enlargement, and flourishing state; we foresee it, but we are not like to live to see it. Those that shall come after us we hope will enter that promised land,

which is a comfort to us when we find our own carcases falling in this wilderness. See 2 *Kings vii. 2.*

5. He saw all this just before his death. Sometimes God reserves the brightest discoveries of his grace to his people to be the support of their dying moments. Canaan was *Immanuel's land*, (*Isa. viii. 8.*) so that in viewing it he had a view of the blessings we enjoy by Christ: It was a type of heaven; *Heb. xi. 16.* which faith is the substance and evidence of. Note, Those may leave this world with a great deal of cheerfulness that die in the faith of Christ, and in the hope of heaven, and with Canaan in their eye. Having thus seen the salvation of God, we may well say, *Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.*

5. ¶ So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. 6. ¶ And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. 7. ¶ And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. 8. ¶ And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days, so the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended.

Here is, 1. The death of Moses, ver. 5. *Moses the servant of the Lord died.* God told him he must not go over Jordan, and tho' at first he prayed earnestly for the reversing of the sentence, yet God's answer to his prayer sufficed him, and now he *spoke no more of that matter*, *Deut. iii. 26.* Thus our blessed Saviour prayed that the cup might pass from him, yet since it might not, he acquiesced with, *Father, thy will be done.* Moses had reason to desire to live a while longer in the world. He was old it is true, but he had not yet attained to the years of the life of his fathers; his father Amram lived to be one hundred thirty-seven; his grandfather Kobath one hundred thirty-three; his great-grandfather Levi one hundred thirty-seven, *Exod. vi. 16—20.* And why must Moses, whose life was more serviceable than any of theirs, die at one hundred and twenty; especially, since he felt not the decays of age, but was as fit for service as ever? Israel could ill spare him at this time; his conduct, and his converse with God would be as great a happiness to them in the conquest of Canaan, as the courage of Joshua. It bore hard upon Moses himself, when he had gone through all the fatigues of the wilderness, to be prevented from enjoying the pleasures of Canaan; when he had born the burthen and heat of the day, to resign the honour of finishing the work to another; and that not his son, but his servant, who must enter into his labours; we may suppose this against the grain to flesh and blood. But the man Moses, was very meek; God will have it so, and he cheerfully submits. (1.) He is here called *the servant of the Lord*; not only as a good man, all the saints are God's servants; but as a useful man, eminently useful, who had served God's counsels in bringing Israel out of Egypt, and leading them through the wilderness. It was more his honour to be the *servant of the Lord*, than to be king in Jeshurun. (2.) Yet he dies. Neither his piety nor his usefulness would exempt him from the stroke of death. God's servants must die; that they may rest from their labours; receive their recompense, and make room for others. When God's servants are removed, and must serve him no longer on earth, they go to *serve him better*, to serve him *day and night in his temple.* (3.) He dies in the land of Moab, short of Canaan, while as yet he and his people were in an unsettled condition, and not entered into their rest. In the heavenly Canaan there will be no more death. (4.) He dies according to the word of the Lord. At the mouth of the Lord. So the word is. The Jews say, God sucked his soul out of his body with a kiss. No doubt he died very easily (it was an *ευθανασία*) there were no bands in his death; and had in his death a most pleasing taste of the love of God to him: but that he died in the mouth of the Lord, means no more but that he died in compliance with the will of God. Note, The servants of the Lord, when they have done all their other work must die at last in obedience to their master, and be freely willing to go home whenever he sends for them, *Acts xxi. 13.*

2. His burial, ver. 6. It is a groundless conceit of some of the Jews, that Moses was translated to heaven as Elijah was, for it is expressly said, he *died and was buried*; yet probably he was raised to meet Elias, to grace the solemnity of Christ's transfiguration. (1.) God himself buried him, viz. by the ministry of angels, which made this funeral tho' very private, yet very magnificent. Note, God takes care of the dead bodies of his servants; as their death is precious, so is their dust, not a grain of it shall be lost, but the covenant with it shall be remembered. When Moses was dead, God buried him, when Christ was dead God raised him, for the law of Moses was to have an end, but not the gospel of Christ: believers are dead to the law that they might be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, *Rom. vii. 4.* It should seem, Michael, that is, Christ, (as some think) had the burying of Moses, for by him the Mosaic ordinances were abolished and taken out of the way, *nailed to his cross*, and buried in his grave, *Col. ii. 14.* (2.) He was buried in a valley over against Beth-peor. How easily could the angels that buried him have conveyed him over Jordan, and buried him with the patriarchs in the cave of Machpelah!

But we must learn not to be over solicitous about the place of our burial, if the soul be at rest with God, the matter is not great where the body rests. One of the Chaldee paraphrasts saith, he was buried over against Beth-peor, that whenever Baal-peor boasted of the Israelites being joined to him, the grave of Moses over against his temple might be a check to him. 3. The particular place was not known; left the children of Israel, who were so very prone to idolatry, should have enshrined and worshipped the dead body of Moses, that great founder and benefactor of their nation. It is true, we read not among all the instances of their idolatry that they worshipped relicks, the reason of which perhaps was, because they were thus prevented from worshipping Moses, and so could not for shame worship any other. Some of the Jewish writers say, the body of Moses was concealed, that necromancers, who enquired of the dead, might not disquiet him, as the witch of Endor did Samuel, to bring him up; God would not have the name and memory of his servant Moses thus abused. Many think, this was the contest between Michael and the devil about the body of Moses mentioned, Jude 9. The devil would make the place known that it might be a snare to the people, and Michael would not let him. Those therefore who are for giving divine honour to the relicks of departed saints, side with the devil against Michael our prince.

3. His age, ver. 7. His life was prolonged, (1.) To old age. He was one hundred and twenty years old, which tho' far short of the years of the patriarchs, yet much exceeded the years of most of his contemporaries, for the ordinary of age man was lately reduced to seventy, *Psal.* xc. 10. The years of the life of Moses were three forties; the first forty he lived a courtier, at ease, and in honour, in Pharaoh's court; the second forty he lived a poor desolate shepherd in Midian; the third forty he lived a king in Jeshurun, in honour and power, but allayed with a great deal of care and toil; so changeable is the world we live in, and allayed with such mixtures; the world before us is unmixed and unchangeable. (2.) To a good old age. *His eye was not dim*, as Isaac's, *Gen.* xxvii. 1. and Jacob's, *Gen.* xlviii. 10. *Nor was his natural force abated*; there was no decay either of the strength of his body, or of the vigour and activity of his mind, but he could still speak and write and walk as well as ever; his understanding as clear, and his memory as strong as ever. His visage was not wrinkled, say some of the Jewish writers; he had lost never a tooth, say others; and many of them expound it of the shining of his face, *Exod.* xxxiv. 30. that that continued to the last. This was the general reward of his services; and it was in particular the effect of his extraordinary meekness, for that is a grace which is as much as any other, *Health to the navel and marrow to the bones*. The moral law which was given by Moses, tho' its condemning power be vacated to true believers, yet its commands are still binding, and will be to the end of the world; the eye of them is not waxen dim, for they still discern the thoughts and intents of the heart, nor is their natural force or obligation abated, but still we are *under the law to Christ*.

4. The solemn mourning that there was for him, ver. 8. It is a debt owing to the surviving honour of deceased worthies, to follow them with our tears, as those that loved and valued them, are sensible of our loss of them, and are truly humbled for those sins which have provoked God to deprive us of them; for penitential tears very fitly mix with these. Observe, 1. Who the mourners were, the children of Israel: they all conformed to the ceremony, whatever it was; tho' some of them perhaps that were ill-affected to his government, were but mock-mourners. Yet we may suppose there were those among them who had formerly quarrelled with him and his government, and perhaps had been of those that spake of stoning him, who now were sensible of their loss, and heartily lamented him when he was removed from them, who knew not how to value him when he was with them: Thus they that had murmured were made to learn doctrine, *Ilsa.* xxix. 24. Note, the loss of good men, especially good governors, is to be much lamented and laid to heart: those are stupid who do not consider it. 2. How long they mourned, thirty days; so long the formality lasted, and we may think there were some in whom the real mourning continued much longer. Yet the *ending of the days of weeping and mourning* for Moses is an intimation, that how great soever our losses have been, we must not abandon ourselves to perpetual grief; we must suffer the wound at least to heal up in time. If we hope to go to heaven rejoicing, why should we resolve to go to the grave mourning? The ceremonial law of Moses is dead, and buried in the grave of Christ; but the Jews have not yet ended the days of their mourning for it.

9. ¶ And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses. 10. ¶ And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face. 11. In all the signs and the wonders which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, 12. And in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses shewed in the sight of all Israel.

We have here a very honourable encomium both of Moses and Joshua; each have their praise, and should have. It is ungrateful so to magnify our living friends, as to forget the merits of those that are gone, to whose memories there is a debt of honour due: all the respects must not be paid to the rising sun; and on the other hand, it is unjust so to cry up the merits of those that are gone, as to despise the benefit we have in those that survive and succeed them: Let God be glorified in both, as here.

1. Joshua is praised as a man admirably well qualified for the work to which he was called, ver. 9. Moses brought Israel to the borders of Canaan, and then died and left them, to signify that *the law made nothing perfect*, Heb. vii. 19. It brings men into a wilderness of conviction, but not into the Canaan of rest and settled peace: It is an honour reserved for Joshua, (our Lord Jesus, of whom Joshua was a type) to do that for us which *the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh*, Rom. viii. 3. Through him we enter into rest; the spiritual rest of conscience, and eternal rest in heaven. Three things concurred to clear Joshua's call to this great undertaking. 1. God fitted him for it: *He was full of the spirit of wisdom*; and so he had need, who had such a peevish people to rule, and such a politick people to conquer. Conduct is as requisite in a general as courage. Herein Joshua was a type of Christ, in whom are hid the treasures of wisdom. 2. Moses by the divine appointment had ordained him to it; *He had laid his hands upon him*; so substituting him to be his successor, and praying to God to qualify him for the service to which he had called him: and this comes in as a reason why God gave him a more than ordinary *spirit of wisdom*, because his designation to the government was God's own act; and those whom God employs, he will in some measure make fit for the employment; and because this was the thing that Moses had asked of God for him, when he *laid his hands on him*. When the bodily presence of Christ withdrew from his church, he prayed the Father to send another Comforter; and obtained what he prayed for. 3. The people cheerfully owned him, and submitted to him. Note, An interest in the affections of people is a great advantage, and a great encouragement to those that are called to publick trusts of what kind soever. It was also a great mercy to the people that when Moses was dead, they were not as sheep having no shepherd, but had one ready among them, in whom they did unanimously, and might with the highest satisfaction, acquiesce.

2. Moses is praised, ver. 10, 11, 12. And with good reason.

1. He was indeed a very great man upon two accounts, among others, (1.) His intimacy with the God of nature; *God knew him face to face*, and so he knew God. See *Numb.* xii. 8. He saw more of the glory of God than any (at least) of the Old Testament saints ever did: He had more free, and frequent access to God, and was spoken to, not in dreams and visions, and flumblings on the bed, but when he was awake, and standing before the cherubims. Other prophets, when God appeared and spoke to them, were struck with terror, *Dan.* x. 7. but Moses, whenever he received a divine revelation, kept his temper. (2.) His interest and power in the kingdom of nature; the miracles of judgment he wrought in Egypt before Pharaoh, the miracles of mercy he wrought in the wilderness before Israel, served to demonstrate that he was a particular favourite of heaven, and had an extraordinary commission to act as he did on this earth. Never was there any man whom Israel had more reason to love, nor whom the enemies of Israel had more reason to fear. Observe, the historian calls the miracles Moses wrought, signs and wonders, done with a mighty hand, and greater terror; which may refer to the terrors of mount Sinai, by which God fully ratified Moses's commission, and demonstrated it beyond exception to be divine, and this *in the sight of all Israel*.

2. He was greater than any other of the prophets of the Old Testament, tho' they were men of great interest in heaven, and great influence upon earth, yet they were none of them to be compared with this great man; none of them either evidenced or executed a commission from heaven so as Moses did. This seems to have been written long after, yet then there had not risen any prophet like unto Moses; nor did there arise any such betwixt, and the *sealing up of the vision and prophecy*. By Moses God gave the law, and moulded and formed the Jewish church; by the other prophets he only sent particular reproofs, directions, and predictions. The last of the prophets concludes with a charge to *remember the law of Moses*, *Mal.* iv. 4. Christ himself oft appealed to the writings of Moses, and vouched him for a witness, as one that *saw his day* at a distance, and *spoke of him*. But as far as the prophets came short of him, our Lord Jesus went beyond him; his doctrine more excellent, his miracles more illustrious, and his communion with his Father more intimate, for he *had lain in his bosom from eternity*, and by him God doth now in these last days speak to us. Moses was faithful as a servant, but Christ as a son: The history of Moses leaves him buried in the plains of Moab, and concludes with the period of his government; but the history of our Saviour leaves him *sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high*, and we are assured, that *of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end*. The apostle, in his epistle to the Hebrews, largely proves the preeminence of Christ above Moses, as a good reason why we that are Christians should be obedient, faithful, and constant to that holy religion which we make profession of. God by his grace make us all so.

AN
EXPOSITION,
WITH
PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS,
UPON THE
Historical BOOKS
OF THE
OLD TESTAMENT;
VIZ.

JOSHUA,
JUDGES,
RUTH,
ISAMUEL,
II. SAMUEL,
I. KINGS,
II. KINGS,

I. CHRONICLES,
II. CHRONICLES,
EZRA,
NEHEMIAH,
AND
ESTHER.

By MATTHEW HENRY, *Minister of the Gospel.*

The P R E F A C E

To the HISTORICAL BOOKS.

THIS methodized and practical expositions of the Historical Books, ventures abroad, with fear and trembling, in the same plain and homely dress with the former, on the Pentateuch (*ornari res ipsa negat, contenta doceri*). But I trust, through grace, on the same honest design with that, to promote the knowledge of the scripture, in order to the reforming of mens hearts and lives. If I may but be instrumental to make my readers wise and good, wiser and better; more watchful against sin, and more careful of their duty both to God and man, and, in order to that, more in love with the word and law of God, I have all I desire; all I aim at. He that minisreth seed to the sower, multiply the seed sown, by increasing the fruits of our righteousness, 2 Cor. ix. 10.

It is the history of the Jewish church and nation, from their first settlement in the promised land; after their four hundred and thirty years bondage in Egypt, and their forty years wandering in the wilderness; to their resettlement there after their seventy years captivity in Babylon; from Joshua to Nehemiah. The five books of Moses were taken up more with their laws, institutes, and charters, but all these books are purely historical; and in that way of writing, a great deal of very valuable learning and wisdom has been conveyed from one generation to another.

The chronology of this history; and the ascertaining of the times when the several events contained in it happened, would very much illustrate the history, and add to the brightness of it; it is therefore well worthy the search of the curious and ingenious, and they may find both pleasure and profit in perusing the labours of many learned men who have directed their studies that way. I confess I could willingly have entertained my self and reader in this preface, with a calculation of the times, through which this history passeth; but I considered, that such a babe in knowledge as I am, could not pretend either to add to or correct what has been done by so many great writers, much less to decide the controversies that have been agitated among them. I had indeed some thoughts of consulting my worthy and ever honoured friend Mr Tallents of Shrewsbury, the learned author of the *View of Universal History*, and to have begged some advice and assistance from him in methodizing the contents of this history; but that week that I put my last hand to this part, it pleased God to put an end to his useful life, (and useful it was to the last) and to call him to his rest in the eighty-ninth year of his age; so that purpose was broken off, that thought of my heart. But that elaborate performance of his, commonly called his *Chronological Tables*, gives great light to this, as indeed to all other parts of history. And Dr Lightfoot's *Chronology of the Old Testament*, and Mr Cradock's *History of the Old Testament* methodized, may also be of great use to such readers as I write for.

As to the particular chronological difficulties which occur in the thread of this history, I have not been large upon them, because many times I could not satisfy my self, and how then could I satisfy my reader concerning them. I have not indeed met with any difficulties so great, but that solutions might be given of them, and have been, sufficient to silence the atheists and antiscriturists, and to roll away from the sacred records all the reproach of contradiction and inconsistency with themselves, for to do that, it is enough to shew that the difference may be accommodated either this way or that, when at the same time one cannot satisfy ones self which way is the right.

But it is well, these are things about which we may very safely and very comfortably be ignorant and unresolved: What concerns our salvation is plain enough, and we need not perplex our selves about the niceties of Chronology, Genealogy, or Chorography. At least, my undertaking leads me not into those labyrinths: What is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, is what I intend to observe; and would endeavour to open what is dark and hard to be understood, only in order to that. Every author must be taken in his way of writing; the sacred penmen, as they have not left us formal systems, so they have not left us formal annals, but useful narratives of things proper for our direction in the way of duty, which some great judges of common writers have thought to be the most pleasant and profitable histories, and most likely to answer the end. The word of God, manifestis pascit, obscuris exercit, (*Aug. in Job. Tract. 45.*) as one of the ancients expresseth it, hath enough in it that is easy to nourish the meanest to life eternal, yet enough that is difficult to try the industry and humility of the greatest.

There are several things which should recommend this part of sacred writ to our diligent and constant search.

1. That it is history; and therefore entertaining and very pleasant, edifying and very serviceable to the conduct of human life. It gratifies the inquisitive with the knowledge of that which the most intense speculation could not discover any other way. By a retirement into our selves, and a serious contemplation of the objects we are surrounded with, close reasoning may advance many excellent truths without being beholden to any other. But for the knowledge of past events, we are intirely indebted (and must be so) to the reports and records of others. A notion or hypothesis, of a man's own framing, may gain him the reputation of a wit, but a history of a man's own framing, will lay him under the reproach of a cheat, any further than of that which he himself is an eye, or ear-witness of. How much are we indebted then to the divine wisdom and goodness for these writings, which have made things so long since past as familiar to us, as any of the occurrences of the age and place we live in.

History is so edifying, that parables and apologues have been invented to make up the deficiencies of it, for our instruction concerning good and evil; and whatever may be said of other history, we are sure in this history there is no matter of fact recorded, but what has its use, and will help either to expound God's providence, or guide man's prudence.

2. That it is true history, and what we may rely upon the credit of, and need not fear being deceived in. That which the heathens reckoned *tempus ædificiorum*, which they knew nothing at all of, and *tempus mendaciorum*, the account of which was wholly fabulous, is to us *tempus istoriarum*, what we have a most authentick account of. The Greeks were with them, the most celebrated historians, and yet their successors in learning and dominion, the Romans, put them into no good name for their credibility, witness that of the poet: *Et quicquid Græcia Mendax Audet in Historiâ, Juv. Sat. x.* But the history we have before us is of undoubted certainty, and no cunningly devised fable. To be well assured of this is a great satisfaction, especially since we meet with so many things in it truly miraculous, and many more great and marvellous.

3. That it is ancient history, far more ancient than was ever pretended to come from any other hand. Homer, the most ancient genuine heathen writer, now intirely extant, is reckoned to live at the beginning of the Olympiads, near the time when it is computed the city of Rome was founded by Romulus, which was but about the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah. And his writings pretend not to be historical, but poetical fiction all over, rhapsodies indeed they are, and the very Alcoran of Paganism.

The P R E F A C E

The most ancient authentick historians now extant, are Herodotus and Thucydides, who were contemporaries with the latest of our historians, Ezra and Nehemiah, and could not write with any certainty of events much before their own time. The obscurity, deficiency, and uncertainty of all ancient history, but that which we find in the scripture; is abundantly made out by the learned bishop Stillingfleet, in that most useful book, his *Origines Sacrae*; Lib. 1. Let the antiquity of this history not only recommend it to the curious, but recommend to us all that way of religion it directs us in, as the good old way, in which if we walk, we shall find rest to our souls, Jer. vi. 16.

4. That it is church-history, the history of the Jewish church; that sacred society, incorporated for religion, and the custody of the oracles and ordinances of God, by a charter under the broad-seal of heaven, a covenant confirmed by miracles. Many great and mighty nations there were at this time in the world, celebrated, it is likely, for wisdom and learning; and valour, illustrious men, and illustrious actions, yet the records of them are all lost, either in silence or fables, while that little inconsiderable people of the Jews, that dwelt alone, and was not reckoned among the nations, Numb. xxiii. 9. makes so great a figure in the best known, most ancient and most lasting of all histories; and no notice taken in it, of the affairs of other nations; but only as they fell in with the affairs of the Jews; for the Lords portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance, Deut. xxxii. 8, 9. Such a concern has God for his church in every age, and so dear have its interests been to him; let them therefore be so to us, that we may be followers of him as dear children.

5. That it is a divine history, given by inspiration of God, and a part of that blessed book which is to be the standing rule of our faith and practice. And we are not to think it a part of it, which might have been spared, or which we may now pass over, or cast a careless eye upon, as if it were indifferent, whether we read it or no, but to read it as a sacred record preserved for our benefit, on whom the ends of the world are come.

(1.) This history is of great use for the understanding of some other parts of the Old Testament. The account we have here of David's life and reign, and especially of his troubles, is a key to many of his psalms: And much light is given to most of the prophecies by these histories.

(2.) Tho' we have not altogether so many types of Christ here, as we had in the history and law of Moses, yet even here we meet with divers who were figures of him that was to come, such as Joshua, Samson, Solomon, Cyrus, but especially David, whose kingdom was typical of the kingdom of the Messiah, and the covenant of royalty, made with him a dark representation of the covenant of redemption made with the eternal Word; nor know we how to call Christ the son of David, unless we be acquainted with this history; nor how to receive it, that John Baptist was the Elias that was to come, Mat. xi. 14.

(3.) The state of the Jewish Church which is here set before us, was typical of the gospel church, and the state of that in the days of the Messiah; and as the prophecies which related to it looked further to the later days, so did the histories of it; and still these things happened to them for ensamples, 1 Cor. x. 11. By the tenor of this history, we are given to understand these three things concerning the church; for the thing that hath been, is that which shall be, Eccl. i. 9. (1.) That we are not to expect the perfect purity and unity of the church in this world, and therefore not to be stumbled, tho' we are grieved at its corruptions, distempers, and divisions, not to think strange concerning them, as tho' some strange thing happened, much less to think the worse of its laws and constitutions for the sake of them, or despair of its perpetuity. What wretched stains of idolatry, impiety, and immorality appear on the Jewish church; and what a woful breach was there between Judah and Ephraim, yet God took them (as I may say) with all their faults, and never wholly rejected them, till they rejected the Messiah. Israel hath not been forsaken, nor Judah of her God, tho' their land was filled with sin against the holy One of Israel, Jer. li. 5. (2.) That we are not to expect the constant tranquillity and prosperity of the church: It was then oft oppressed and afflicted from its youth, had its years of servitude, as well as its days of triumph, was oft obscured, diminished, impoverished, and brought low, and yet still God secured to himself a remnant, a holy seed which was the substance thereof, Isa. vi. 13. let us not then be surprized, to see the gospel church sometimes under batches, and driven into the wilderness, and the gates of hell prevailing far against it. (3.) That yet we need not fear the utter extirpation of it. The gospel church is called, the Israel of God, Gal. vi. 16. and the Jerusalem which is above, Gal. iv. 26. the heavenly Jerusalem, for as Israel after the flesh, and the Jerusalem that then was, by the wonderful care of the divine providence rid out all the storms with which they were tossed and threatened, and continued in being, till they were made to resign all their honours to the gospel church which they were the figures of; so shall that also notwithstanding all its shocks be preserved, till the mystery of God shall be finished, and the kingdom of grace shall have its perfection, in the kingdom of glory.

(4.) This history is of great use to us for our direction in the way of our duty; it was written for our learning, that we may see the evil we should avoid, and be armed against it; and the good we should do and be quickened to it. Tho' they are generally judges, and kings, and great men, whose lives are here written, yet in them, even those of the meanest rank, may see the deformity of sin and hate it; and the beauty of holiness, and be in love with it; nay, the greater the person is, the more evident are both these; for if the great be good, it is their goodness that makes their greatness honourable; if bad, their greatness doth but make their badness the more shameful. The failings even of good people, are also recorded here for our admonition, that he that thinks he stands, may take heed lest he fall; and that he that has fallen may not despair of forgiveness, if he recover himself by repentance.

(5.) This history, as it shews what God requires of us, so it shews what we may expect from his providence, especially concerning states and kingdoms. By the dealings of God with the Jewish nation, it appears, that as nations are, so they must expect to fare; that while princes and people serve the interests of God's kingdom among men, he will secure and advance their interests; but when they shake off his government, and rebel against him, they can look for no other but an inundation of judgments: It was so all along with Israel, while they kept close to God they prospered, when they forsook him every thing went cross. That great man, archbishop Tillotson (Vol. I. Sermon 3. on Prov. xiv. 34.) suggests, That tho' as to particular persons, the providences of God are promiscuously administered in this world, because there is another world of rewards and punishments for them, yet it is not so with nations as such, but national virtues are ordinarily rewarded with temporal blessings, and national sins punished with temporal judgments; because, as he saith, publick bodies and communities of men as such, can only be rewarded and punished in this world, for in the next they will all be dissolved. So plainly are God's ways of disposing kingdoms laid before us in the glass of this history, that I could wish christian statesmen would think themselves as much concerned as preachers, to acquaint themselves with it; they might fetch as good maxims of state and rules of policy from this, as from the best of the Greek and Roman historians. We are blessed (as they were) with a divine revelation, and make a national profession of religion, and relation to God, and therefore are to look upon our selves as in a peculiar manner under a divine regimen, so that the things which happened to them were designed for ensamples to us.

I cannot pretend to write for great ones. But if what is here done, may be delightful to any in reading, and helpful in understanding, and improving this sacred history, and governing themselves by the dictates of it, let God have all the glory, and let all the rivers return to the ocean from whence they came. When I look back on what is done, I see nothing to boast of, but a great deal to be ashamed of; and when I look forward on what is to be done, I see nothing in my self to trust to for the doing of it; no sufficiency of my own, but by the grace of God, I am what I am, and that grace shall, I trust, be sufficient for me. Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength. That blessed *ἐπιχορηγία*, which the apostle speaks of, Phil. i. 19. that continual supply or communion of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, is what we may in faith pray for, and depend upon, to furnish us for every good word and work.

The pleasantness of the study has drawn me on to the writing of this, and the candour with which my friends have been pleased to receive my poor endeavours on the Pentateuch encourageth me to publish it; it is done according to the best of my skill, not without some care and application of mind, in the same method and manner with that; I wish I could have done it in less compass, that

to the HISTORICAL BOOKS.

that it might have been more within reach of the poor of the flock. But then it would not have been so plain and full as I desire it may be for the benefit of the lambs of the flock; Brevis esse laboro, Obscurus fio.

With an humble submission to the divine providence, and the disposals of that, and a humble reliance on the divine grace and the conduct and operation of that, I purpose still to proceed, as I have time, in this work. Two volumes more will, if God permit, conclude the Old Testament; and then, if my friends encourage me, and my God spare me, and enable me for it, I intend to go on to the New Testament. For tho' many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those parts of scripture which are yet before us (Luke i. 1.), whose works praise them in the gates, and are likely to outlive mine, yet while the subject is really so copious as it is, and the manner of handling it may possibly be so various, and while one book comes into the hands of some, and another into the hands of others, and all concur in the same design to advance the common interests of Christ's kingdom, the common faith once delivered to the saints, and the common salvation of precious souls; (Tit. i. 4. Jude 3.) I hope store of this kind will be thought no sore. I make bold to mention my purpose to proceed thus publicly, in hopes I may have the advice of my friends in it, and their prayers for me, that I may be made more ready and mighty in the scriptures, that understanding and utterance may be given to me, and that I may obtain mercy of the Lord Jesus, to be found his faithful servant, who am less than the least of all that call him master.

Chester,
June 2. 1708.

M. H.



A N E X P O S I T I O N, W I T H P R A C T I C A L O B S E R V A T I O N S, Upon the Book of J O S H U A.

We have now before us, 1. The history of the Jewish nation, in this book, and those that follow it to the end of the book of Esther. These books, to the end of the books of the Kings, the Jewish writers call the first book of the prophets; to bring them within the distribution of the books of the Old Testament; into the law, the prophets, and the Cherubhim, or Hagiographa, Luke xxiv. 44. The rest they make part of the Hagiographa. For tho' history be their subject; it is justly supposed prophets were their penmen: To these books that are purely and properly prophetic the name of the prophet is prefixed, because the credibility of the prophecies depended much upon the character of the prophets; but these historical books, it is probable were collections of the authentick records of the nation, which some prophets or other, (and such the Jewish church was for many ages more or less continually blessed with) were divinely directed, and helped to put together, for the service of the church to the end of the world; as their other officers, so their Historiographers had their authority from Heaven.—It should seem that tho' the substance of the several histories were written when the events were fresh in memory, and written under a divine direction, yet that long after, they were put into the form wherein we now have them, by some other hand, under divine direction likewise; probably all by the same hand; or about the same time. The grounds of the conjecture are, (1.) Because former writings are so oft referred to, as the book of Jasher, Josh. x. 13. and 2 Sam. i. 18. and the chronicles of the kings of Israel and Judah often; and the books of Gad, Nathan, and Iddo. (2.) Because the days when the things were done are spoken of sometimes as days long since passed; as 1 Sam. ix. 9. He that is now called a prophet was then called a seer. And (3.) Because we so oft read of things remaining unto this day, as stones, Josh. iv. 9. vii. 26.—viii. 29.—x. 27. 1 Sam. vi. 18. Names of places, Josh. v. 9.—vii. 26. Judg. i. 36.—xv. 19.—xviii. 12. 2 Kings xiv. 7. Rights and possessions, Judg. i. 21. 1 Sam. xxvii. 6. Customs and usages, 1 Sam. v. 5. 2 Kings xvii. 41. Which clauses since have been added to the history by the inspired collectors, for the confirmation and illustration of it to those of their own age: And if one may offer a meer conjecture, it is not unlikely that the historical books to the end of the Kings were put together by Jeremiah the prophet, a little before the captivity, for it is said of Ziklag, 1 Sam. xxvii. 6. it remains to the kings of Judah (which style began after Solomon, and ended in the captivity) unto this day: And that those after were put together by Ezra the scribe, some time after the captivity. However, tho' we are in the dark concerning their authors, we are in no doubt concerning their authority, they were a part of the oracles of God, which were committed to the Jews, and were so received and referred to by our Saviour and the apostles.—In the five books of Moses we had a very full account of the rise, advance, and constitution of the Old-Testament church, the family out of which it was raised, the promise, that great charter by which it was incorporated, the miracles by which it was built up, and the laws and ordinances by which it was to be governed: From which one would conceive an expectation

tion of its character and state very different from what we find in this history: A nation that had statutes and judgments so righteous one would think should have been very holy, and that had promises so rich should have been very happy. But alas, a great part of the history is a melancholy representation of their sins and miseries, for the law made nothing perfect; that was to be done by the bringing in of the better hope. And yet if we compare the history of the Christian church with its constitution, we shall find the same cause for wonder, so many have been its errors and corruptions, for neither doth the gospel make any thing perfect in this world, but leaves us still in expectation of a better hope in the future state.

2. We have next before us the book of Joshua, so called perhaps not because it was written by him, for that is uncertain. However that be, it is written concerning him, and if any other wrote it it was collected out of his journals, or memoirs. It contains the history of Israel under the command and government of Joshua, how he presided as general of their armies, (1.) In their entrance into Canaan, chap. i.—v. (2.) In their conquest of Canaan, chap. vi.—xii. (3.) In the distribution of the land of Canaan among the tribes of Israel, chap. xiii.—xv. (4.) In the settlement and establishment of religion among them, chap. xxii.—xxiv. In all which he was a great example of wisdom, courage, fidelity, and piety, to all that are in

Dr Lightfoot thinks Phineas wrote it. Bishop Patrick is clear that Joshua wrote it himself.

places of publick trust. But that is not all the use that is to be made of this history, we may see in it, 1. Much of God, and his providence, his power in the kingdom of nature, his justice in punishing the Canaanites when the measure of their iniquity was full; his faithfulness to his covenant with the patriarchs, his kindness to his people Israel notwithstanding their provocations. See him as the Lord of Hosts determining the issues of war, and as the director of the lot, determining the bounds of mens habitations. 2. Much of Christ, and his grace. Tho' Joshua is not expressly mentioned in the New Testament as a type of Christ, yet all agree he was a very eminent one. He bore our Saviour's name, as did also another type of him, Joshua the high-priest, Zech. vi. 11, 12. The LXX giving the name Joshua a Greek termination call him all along *Ἰησοῦς*, Jesus, and so he is called, Acts vii. 45. and Heb. iv. 8. Justin Martyr, one of the first writers of the Christian church, (Dialog. cum Tryph. p. mibi 300.) makes that promise, Exod. xxiii. 20. Mine angel shall bring thee into the place I have prepared, to point at Joshua, and these words, My name is in him, to refer to this, that his name should be the same with that of the Messiah; it signifies, He shall save. Joshua saves God's people from the Canaanites, our Lord Jesus saves them from their sins. Christ, as Joshua, is the captain of our salvation, a leader and commander of the people, to tread Satan under their feet, and to put them in possession of the heavenly Canaan, and to give them rest, which (it is said Heb. iv. 8.) Joshua did not.

CHAP. I.

The book begins with the history not of Joshua's life, many remarkable passages of that we had before in the books of Moses, but of his reign and government. In this chapter (1.) God appoints him to the government, in the stead of Moses, gives him an ample commission, full instructions, and great encouragements, ver. 1—9. (2.) He accepts the government, and addresses himself immediately to the business of it, giving orders to the officers of the people in general, ver. 10, 11. And particularly to the two tribes and a half, ver. 12—15. (3.) The people agree to it, and take an oath of fealty to him, ver. 16—18. And a reign, which thus began with God, could not but be honourable to the prince, and comfortable to the subject. The last words of Moses are still verified, Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people? Deut. xxxiii. 29.

1. **N**OW after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses minister, saying, 2. Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan; thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. 3. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. 4. From the wilderness, and this Lebanon, even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea, toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. 5. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. 6. Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land which I swore unto their fathers to give them. 7. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. 8. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. 9. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage, be not afraid, neither be thou

dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee, whithersoever thou goest.

Honour is here put upon Joshua and great power lodged in his hand, by him that is the fountain of honour and power, and by whom kings reign; instructions given him by infinite wisdom, and encouragements by the God of all consolation. God had before spoken to Moses concerning him, Numb. xxvii. 18. But now he speaks to him, ver. 1. probably as he spake to Moses, Lev. i. 1. out of the tabernacle of the congregation, where Joshua had with Moses presented himself, Deut. xxxi. 14. to learn the way of attending there. Tho' Eleazar had the breast-plate of judgment, which Joshua was directed to consult as there was occasion, Numb. xxvii. 21. yet, for his greater encouragement, God here speaks to him immediately, some think, in a dream or vision, (as Job xxxiii. 15.) for tho' God has tyed us to instituted ordinances, in them to attend him, yet he hath not tyed himself to them, but that he may otherwise make himself known to his people, and speak to their hearts otherwise than by their ears.

Concerning Joshua's call to the government, observe here, 1. The time when it was given him, After the death of Moses. As soon as ever Moses was dead, Joshua took upon him the administration, by virtue of his solemn ordination in Moses's life-time; an interregnum, tho' but for a few days, might have been of ill consequence; but, it is probable, God spoke to him to go forward towards Canaan, not till after the thirty days of mourning for Moses were ended; not, as the Jews say, because the sadness of his spirit during those days dis-fitted him for communion with God, he sorrowed not as one that had no hope; but by this solemn pause, and a month's adjournment of the publick counsels, even now when time was so very precious to them, God would put an honour upon the memory of Moses, and give time to the people not only to lament their loss of him, but to repent of their miscarriages towards him during the forty years of his government. 2. The place Joshua had been in before he was thus preferred. He was Moses's minister, i. e. an immediate attendant upon his person, and assistant in business. The LXX translate it *ἐπίτροπος*, a workman under Moses, under his direction and command. Observe, 1. He that was here called to honour had been long bred to business. Our Lord Jesus himself took upon him the form of a servant, and then God highly exalted him. 2. He was trained up in subjection, and under command. Those are fittest to rule, that have learnt to obey. 3. He that was to succeed Moses was intimately acquainted with him, that he might fully know his doctrine and manner of life, his purpose and long suffering, (2 Tim. iii. 10.) might take the same measures, walk in the same spirit, in the same steps, being to carry on the same work. 4. He was herein a type of Christ, who might therefore be called Moses's minister, because he was made under the law, and fulfilled all the righteousness of it.

3. The call it self that God gave him, which is very full.
 1. The consideration upon which he was called to the government, *Moses my servant is dead*, ver. 2. All good men are God's servants; and it is no disparagement but an honour to the greatest of men to be so; angels themselves are his ministers. Moses was called to extraordinary work, was a steward in God's house, and in the discharge of the trusts reposed in him he served not himself, but God that employed him; was faithful as a servant, and with an eye to the son, as is intimated *Heb. iii. 5.* where what he did is said to be for a *testimony of the things that should be spoken after*; God will own his servants, will confess them in the great day. But Moses, tho' God's servant, and one that could ill be spared, is dead, for God will change hands, to shew that whatever instruments he useth, he is not tied to any. Moses when he has done his work as a servant dies, and goes to rest from his labours, and enters into the joy of his Lord. Observe, God takes notice of the death of his servants. *It is precious in his sight*, *Psalm. cxvi. 15.*

2. The call it self, *Now therefore arise*. (1.) Though Moses is dead, the work must go on, therefore arise and go about it. Let not weeping hinder sowing, nor the withering of the most useful hands be the weakning of ours; for when God has work to do, he will either find or make instruments fit to carry it on. Moses the servant is dead, but God the master is not, he lives for ever. (2.) Because Moses is dead, therefore the work devolves upon thee as his successor, for hereunto thou wast appointed. Therefore there is need of thee to fill up his place, Up and be doing. Note, (1.) The removal of useful men should quicken the survivors to be so much the more diligent in doing good. Such and such are dead, and we must die shortly, therefore let us work while it is day. (2.) It is a great mercy to a people, if when useful men are taken away in the midst of their usefulness, others are raised up in their stead to go on where they broke off. Joshua must arise to finish what Moses began, thus the latter generations enter into the labours of the former. And thus Christ, our Joshua, doth that for us which could never be done by the law of Moses, *justifies*, *Acts xiii. 39.* and *sanctifies*, *Rom. viii. 3.* The life of Moses made way for Joshua, and prepared the people for what was to be done by him. Thus the law is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ: and then the death of Moses made room for Joshua, thus we are dead to the law our first husband, that we may be married to Christ. *Rom. vii. 4.*

3. The particular service he was now called out to. Arise, go over this Jordan, this river you have in view, and on the banks of which you lie encamped. This was a trial to the faith of Joshua, whether he would give orders, and make preparation for passing the river, when there was no visible way of getting over it, at least not at this place, and at this time when *all the banks were overflowed*, chap. iii. 15. He had no pontons, or bridge of boats, by which to convey them over, and yet he must believe, if God order them over he will open a way for them. Going over Jordan was going into Canaan, thither Moses might not, could not bring them, *Deut. xxxi. 2.* Thus the honour of bringing the many sons to glory is reserved for Christ, the *captain of our salvation*, *Heb. ii. 10.*

4. The grant of the land of Canaan to the children of Israel is here repeated, ver. 2, 3, 4. *I do give it them*. To the patriarchs it was *promised*, *I will give it*, but now the fourth generation was expired, the iniquity of the Amorites was full, and the time was come for the performance of the promise; it is actually conveyed, and they are put in possession of that which they had long been put in expectation of, *I do give it*, enter upon it, it is all your own, nay, ver. 3. *I have given it*; tho' it be yet unconquered, it is as sure to you as if it were in your hands. Observe, (1.) The persons to whom the conveyance is made, *to them, even to the children of Israel*, ver. 2. because they are the seed of Jacob, who was called Israel then when this promise was made to him, *Gen. xxxv. 10, 12.* The children of Israel tho' they had been very provoking in the wilderness, yet for their fathers sakes should have the entail preserved. And it was the children of the murderers that God said should enter Canaan, *Numb. xiv. 31.* (2.) The land it self that is conveyed, from the river Euphrates eastward, to the Mediterranean sea westward, ver. 4. Tho' their sin cut them short of this large possession, and they never replenished all the country within the bounds here mentioned; yet had they been obedient, God would have given them this, and much more. Out of all these countries, and many other, there were in process of time profelytes to the Jewish religion, as appears *Acts ii. 5. &c.* If their church was enlarged, tho' their nation was multiplied, it cannot be said that the promise was of none effect. And if this promise had not its full accomplishment in the letter, believers might thence infer that it had a further meaning, and was to be fulfilled in the kingdom of the Messiah, both that of grace, and that of glory. (3.) The condition is here implied upon which this grant is made in those words, *I said unto Moses, i. e. upon the terms that Moses told you of*, many a time; *if ye will keep my statutes*, you shall go in and possess that good land. Take it under those provisos and limitations and not otherwise. The precept and promise must not be separated. (4.) It is intimated with what ease they

should gain the possession of this land, if it were not their own fault, in these words, *every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon* (within the following bounds) shall be your own. Do but set your foot upon it and you have it.

5. The promises God here makes to Joshua for his encouragement. 1. That he should be sure of the presence of God with him in this great work to which he was called; ver. 5. *As I was with Moses* to direct and strengthen him, to own and prosper him; and give him success in bringing Israel out of Egypt, and leading them through the wilderness, so I will be with thee to enable thee to settle them in Canaan. Joshua was sensible how far he came short of Moses in wisdom and grace, but what Moses did was done by virtue of the presence of God with him, and if Joshua tho' he had not always the same presence of mind that Moses had, yet if he had always the same presence of God, he would do well enough. Note, It is a great comfort to the rising generation of ministers and christians, that the same grace which was sufficient for those that went before them, shall not be wanting to them, if they be not wanting to themselves in the improvement of it. It is repeated here again ver. 9. *The Lord thy God is with thee*, as a God of power, and that power engaged for thee, whither-soever thou goest. Note, Those that go where God sends them; shall have him with them wherever they go, and they need desire no more to make them easy and prosperous. 2. That the presence of God should never be withdrawn from him, *I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee*, ver. 5. Moses had assured him of this, *Deut. xxxi. 8.* that tho' he must now leave him, God never would, and here God himself confirms that word of his servant Moses, (*Isai. xlv. 26.*) and engageth never to leave Joshua. We need the presence of God not only when we are beginning our work to set us in, but in the progress of it to further us with a continual help. If that at any time fail us, we are gone; but this we may be sure of, that *the Lord is with us while we are with him*. This promise here made to Joshua is applied to all believers, and improved as an argument against covetousness, *Heb. xiii. 5.* *Be content with such things as ye have*, for he hath said, *I will never leave thee*. 3. That he should have victory over all the enemies of Israel, ver. 5. *There shall not any man*, that stands against thee, *be able to stand before thee*. Note, There is no standing before those that have God on their side, *If he be for us who can be against us?* God promiseth him clear success, the enemy should not make any head against him; and constant success all the days of his life; however it might be with Israel when he was gone, all his reign should be graced with triumphs. What Joshua had himself encouraged the people with long ago, *Numb. xiv. 9.* God here encourageth him with. 4. That he should himself have the dividing of this land among the people of Israel, ver. 6. It was a great encouragement to him in beginning this work, that he was sure to see it finished, and his labour should not be in vain. Some make it a reason why he should arm himself with resolution, and be of good courage, because of the ill character this people was under, whom he must cause to inherit that land; he knew well enough what a froward discontented people they were, and how unmanageable they had been in his predecessor's time, let him therefore expect vexation from them, and be of good courage.

6. The charge and command he gives to Joshua, which is;

1. That he conform himself in every thing to the law of God, and make that his rule, ver. 7, 8. God doth as it were put the book of the law into Joshua's hand, as when Joash was crowned they gave him the testimony, *2 Kings xi. 12.* And concerning this book, he is charged (1.) *To meditate therein day and night*, that he might understand it, and have it ready to him upon all occasions. If ever any man's business might have excused him from meditation, and other acts of devotion, one would think Joshua's might at this time; it was a great trust that was lodged in his hands, the care of it was enough to fill him if he had had ten souls; and yet he must find time and thoughts for meditation. Whatever affairs of this world we have to mind, we must not neglect the one thing needful. (2.) Not to let it depart out of his mouth, *i. e.* All his orders to the people, and his judgments upon appeals made to him, must be consonant to the law of God; upon all occasions he must *speak according to this rule*, *Isai. viii. 20.* Joshua was to maintain and carry on the work that Moses had begun, and therefore he must not only compleat the salvation Moses had wrought for them, but must uphold that holy religion he had established among them. There was no occasion to make new laws, but *that good thing which was committed to him* he must carefully and faithfully keep, *2 Tim. i. 14.* (3.) He must observe to do according to all this law. To this end he must meditate therein, not for contemplation sake only, or to fill his head with notions, or that he might find something to puzzle the priests with, but that he might, both as a man and as a magistrate observe to do according to what was written therein; and several things were written there which had particular reference to the business he had now before him, as the laws concerning their wars, the destroying of the Canaanites, and the dividing of Canaan, &c. these he must religiously observe. Joshua was a man of great power and authority, yet he must himself be under command, and do as he is bidden. No man's dignity or dominion, how great soever, sets him above the law of God. Joshua must not only

govern by law, and take care that the people observed the law, but he must observe it himself, and so by his own example maintain the honour and power of it. (1.) He must do what was written; it is not enough to hear and read the word, to commend and admire it, to know and remember it, to talk and discourse of it, but we must do it. (2.) He must do according to what was written, exactly observing the law as his copy, and doing not only that which was there required, but in all circumstances according to the appointment. (3.) He must do according to all that was written, without exception or reserve, having a *respect to all God's commandments*, even those which are most displeasing to flesh and blood. (4.) He must observe to do so, observe the checks of conscience, the hints of providence, and all the advantages of opportunity: careful observance is necessary to universal obedience. (5.) He must not turn from it, either in his own practice, or in any act of government, to the right hand or to the left, for there are errors on both hands, and virtue is in the mean. (6.) He must be strong and courageous, that he may do according to the law. So many discouragements there are in the way of duty, that those who will proceed and persevere in it, must put on resolution. And (lastly) to encourage him in his obedience, he assures him, that then he shall do wisely (as it is in the margin) and *make his way prosperous*, ver. 7, 8. They that make the word of God their rule, and conscientiously walk by that rule, shall both do well and speed well; it will furnish them with the best maxims, by which to order their conversation, *Psal. cxi. 10.* And it will entitle them to the best blessings; God shall *give them the desire of their heart*.

2. That he encourage himself herein with the promise and presence of God, and make those his stay, ver. 6. *Be strong and of a good courage.* And again, ver. 7. As if this was the one thing needful, *only be strong and very courageous.* And he concludes with this, ver. 9. *Be strong and of a good courage, be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed.* Joshua had long since signalized his valour, in the war with Amalek, and in his dissent from the report of the evil spies, and yet God sees fit thus to inculcate this precept upon him. Those that have grace, have need to be called upon again and again to exercise grace, and to improve in it. Joshua was humble and low in his own eyes, not distrustful of God, and his power, and promise, but diffident of himself, and of his own wisdom, and strength, and sufficiency for the work, especially coming after so great a man as Moses, and therefore God repeats this so oft, *be strong and of a good courage*; let not the sense of thine own infirmities dishearten thee, God is all-sufficient. *Have not I commanded thee?* (1.) I have commanded the work to be done, and therefore it shall be done; how invincible soever the difficulties may seem that lie in the way. Nay, (2.) I have commanded, called, and commissioned, thee to do it, and therefore will be sure to own thee and strengthen thee, and bear thee out in it. Note, When we are in the way of our duty, we have reason to be *strong and very courageous*; and it will help very much to animate and embolden us to keep our eye upon the divine warrant, and to hear God saying, *Have not I commanded thee?* I will therefore help thee, succeed thee, accept thee, reward thee. Our Lord Jesus, as Joshua here, was born up under his sufferings by a regard to the will of God, and *the commandment he had received from his Father*, John x. 18.

10. ¶ Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, 11. Pass through the host, and command the people saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it. 12. ¶ And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, spake Joshua, saying, 13. Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, The LORD your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land: 14. Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but ye shall pass before your brethren armed: all the mighty men of valour, and help them: 15. Until the LORD have given your brethren rest, as *he hath given you*, and they also have possessed the land which the LORD your God giveth them: then ye shall return unto the land of your possession, and enjoy it, which Moses the LORDS servant gave you on this side Jordan toward the sun-rising.

Joshua being settled in the government, he presently applies himself to business; not to take state, or to take his pleasures, but to further the work of God among the people, over which God had set him. As he that desires the office of a minister, (1 *Tim. iii. 1.*) so he that desires the office of a magistrate, desires a work, a good work; neither are preferred to be idle.

1. He issues out orders to the people to provide for a march, and they had been so long encamped in their present post, that it would be a work of some difficulty to decamp. The officers of

the people that commanded under Joshua in their respective tribes and families attended him for orders, which they were to transmit to the people. Inferior magistrates are as necessary, and as serviceable to the publick good in their places, as the supreme magistrate in his. What could Joshua have done without officers? we are therefore required to be subject, not only to the king as *supream*; but to governors, as to them that are sent by him, 1 *Pet. ii. 13, 14.* By these officers, (1.) Joshua gives publick notice that they were now shortly to pass over Jordan, *within three days.* These orders, I suppose, were not given till after the return of the spies, that were sent to bring an account of Jericho, tho' the story of that affair follows, chap. ii. And perhaps that was such an instance of his jealousy, and over-much caution, as made it necessary he should be so often bidden as he was to be strong and of a good courage. Observe with what assurance Joshua saith it to the people; because God had said it to him, *Ye shall pass over Jordan, and shall possess the land.* We greatly honour the truth of God, when we stagger not at the promise of God. (2.) He gives them directions to prepare victuals, not to prepare transport vessels, he that bore them out of Egypt upon eagles wings, would in like manner bear them into Canaan, to bring them to himself, *Exod. xix. 4.* But those that were minded to have other victuals besides the manna, which was not yet ceased, must prepare it, and have it ready against the time appointed. Perhaps, tho' the manna did not quite cease till they were come into Canaan, chap. v. 12. yet since they were come into a land inhabited, (*Exod. xvi. 35.*) where they might be furnished in part with other provisions, it did not fall so plentifully, nor did they gather so much as when they had it first given them in the wilderness, but decreased gradually, and therefore they are ordered to provide other victuals, in which perhaps was included all other things necessary to their march. And some of the Jewish writers considering, that having manna, they needed not to provide other victuals, understand it figuratively, that they must *repent of their sins* and make their *peace with God*, and resolve to live a new life, that they might be ready to receive this great favour. See *Exod. xix. 10, 11.*

2. He minds the two tribes and a half of the obligation they were under to go over Jordan with their brethren, tho' they left their possessions and families on this side. Interest would make the other tribes glad to go over Jordan, but in these it was an act of self-denial, and against the grain: therefore it was needful to produce the agreement which Moses had made with them, when he gave them their possession before their brethren, ver. 13. *Remember the word which Moses commanded you.* Some of them perhaps were ready to think now Moses was dead, who they thought was too hard upon them in this matter, they might find some excuse or other to discharge themselves from this engagement, or might prevail with Joshua to dispense with them; but he holds them to it, and lets them know, tho' Moses was dead, his commands and their promises were still in full force. He minds them, (1.) Of the advantages they had received in being first settled: *The Lord your God hath given you rest*, given your minds rest, you know what you have to trust to, and are not as the rest of the tribes waiting the issue of the war first, and then of the lot. He has also given your families rest, your wives and children, whose settlement is your satisfaction. He hath given you rest, by giving you this land, this good land, which you are in full and quiet possession of. Note, When God by his providence hath given us rest, we ought to consider how we may honour him with the advantages of it, and what service we may do to our brethren who are unsettled, or not so well settled as we are. When God had given David rest, (2 *Sam. vii. 1.*) see how restless he was till he had found out a habitation for the ark *Psal. cxxxii. 4, 5.* When God has given us rest, we must take heed of slothfulness, and of settling upon our lees. (2.) He minds them of their agreement to help their brethren in the wars of Canaan, till God had in like manner given them rest, ver. 14, 15. This was, (1.) reasonable in it self: so closely were all the tribes incorporated, that they must needs look upon themselves as members one of another. (2.) It was enjoined them by Moses the servant of the Lord; he commanded them to do this, and Joshua his successor would see his commands observed. (3.) It was the only expedient they had to save themselves from the guilt of a great sin in settling on that side Jordan, a sin which would one time or other find them out, *Numb. xxxii. 22.* (4.) It was the condition of the grant Moses had made them of the land they were possessed of, so that they could not be sure of a good title to, or a comfortable enjoyment of, the land of their possession, as it is here called, ver. 15. if they did not fulfil the condition. (5.) They themselves had covenanted and agreed thereunto, *Numb. xxx. 25. Thy servants will do as my Lord commandeth.* Thus we all lie under manifold obligations to strengthen the hands one of another, and not to seek our own welfare only, but one anothers.

16. ¶ And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us, we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go. 17. According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee: only the LORD thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses.

Moses. 18. Whosoever *he be* that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words, in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage.

This answer was given not by the two tribes and a half only, tho' they are spoken of immediately before; but by the *officers of all the people*, (ver. 10.) as their representatives, concurring with the divine appointment, by which Joshua was set over them, and they did it heartily, and with a great deal of cheerfulness and resolution.

1. They promise him obedience, ver. 16. not only as subjects to their prince, but as soldiers to their general, of whose particular orders they are to be observant; he that hath *soldiers under him*, *saith to this man, go, and he goes, and to another, come, and he comes*, Matth. viii. 9. Thus the people of Israel here engage themselves to Joshua, *all that thou commandest us we will readily do*, without murmuring or disputing, and whithersoever thou sendest us, tho' upon the most difficult and perilous expedition, we will go. We must thus swear allegiance to our Lord Jesus, as the captain of our salvation, and bind our selves to do what he commands us by his word, and to go where he sends us by his providence.

And since Joshua being humbly conscious to himself how far short he came of Moses, feared he should not have such an influence upon the people, and such an interest in them as Moses had, they here promise that they would be as obedient to him as ever they had been to Moses, ver. 17. To speak truth, they had no reason to boast of their obedience to Moses, he had found them a stiff-necked people, Deut. ix. 24. But they mean that they would be as observant of Joshua as they should have been, and as some of them were (and the generality of them at least) of Moses. Note, We must not so magnify them that are gone, how eminent so ever they were, either in the magistracy or in the ministry, as to be wanting in the honour and duty we owe to those that survive and succeed them, tho' in gifts they may come short of them. Obedience for conscience sake will continue, tho' providence change the hands by which it rules and acts.

2. They pray for the presence of God with him, ver. 17. *Only the Lord thy God be with thee*, to bless and prosper thee, and give thee success, as he was with Moses. Prayers and supplications are to be made for all in authority, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. And the best thing we can ask of God for our magistrates, is, that they may have the presence of God with them; that will make them blessings to us, so that in seeking this for them we consult our own interest. A reason is here intimated, why they would obey him, as they had obeyed Moses, because they believed (and in faith prayed) that God's presence would be with him as it was with Moses. Those that we have reason to think have favour from God, should have honour and respect from us. Some understand it as a limitation of their obedience; we will obey only as far as we perceive the Lord is with thee, but no further. While thou keepst close to God, we will keep close to thee; hitherto shall our obedience come, but no further. But they were so far from having any suspicion of Joshua's deviating from the divine rule, that there needed not such a proviso.

3. They pass an act to make it death for any Israelite to disobey Joshua's orders, or *rebel against his commandment*, ver. 18. Perhaps, if such a law had been made in Moses's time, it might have prevented many of the rebellions that were formed against him, for most men fear the sword of the magistrate more than the justice of God. Yet there was a special reason for the making of this law now they were entering upon the wars of Canaan, for in time of war the severity of military discipline is more necessary than at other times. Some think, in this statute they have an eye to that law concerning the prophet God would raise up like unto Moses, which they think, tho' it refer chiefly to Christ, yet takes in Joshua by the way, as a type of him, that whosoever would not hearken to him should be *cut off from his people*, Deut. xviii. 19. *I will require it of him*.

4. They animate him to go on with cheerfulness in the work to which God had called him, and in desiring that he would be strong and of a good courage, they do in effect promise him, that they would do all they could, by an exact, bold, and cheerful observance of all his orders, to encourage him. It very much heartens those that lead in a good work to see those that follow, follow with a good will. Joshua, tho' of approved valour, did not take it as an affront, but as a great kindness, for the people to bid him be strong and of a good courage.

CHAP. II.

In this chapter we have an account of the scouts that were employed to bring an account to Joshua of the posture of the city of Jericho: Observe here, 1. How Joshua sent them, ver. 1. 2. How Rahab received them, and protected them, and told a lie for them, ver. 2-7. so that they escaped out of the hands of the enemy. 3. The account she gave them of the present posture of Jericho, and the panic fear they were struck with upon the approach of Israel, ver. 8-11. 4. The bargain she made with them for the security of her self and her relations, in the ruin she saw coming upon her city,

ver. 12-21. 5. Their safe return to Joshua, and the account they gave him of their expedition, ver. 22-24. And that which makes this story most remarkable, is, that Rahab, the person principally concerned in it, is twice celebrated in the New Testament, as a great believer, Heb. xi. 31. and as one whose faith proved itself by good works, Jam. ii. 25.

1. **A**ND Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men, to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho: and they went, and came into an harlots house, named Rahab, and lodged there. 2. And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither to night of the children of Israel, to search out the country. 3. And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entred into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country. 4. And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were. 5. And it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went, I wot not: pursue after them quickly, for ye shall overtake them. 6. But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof. 7. And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan, unto the fords: and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate.

In these verses we have,

1. The prudence of Joshua, in sending spies to observe this important pass which Israel was likely to dispute at their entrance into Canaan, ver. 1. *Go view the land, even Jericho*, Moses had sent spies, Numb. xiii. Joshua himself was one of them, and it proved of ill consequence: yet Joshua now sends spies, not as the former were sent to survey the whole land, but Jericho only; not to bring the account to the whole congregation, but to Joshua only; who, like a watchful general, was continually projecting for the publick good, and was particularly in care to take the first step well, and not to stumble at the threshold. It was not fit that Joshua should disguise himself and venture over Jordan, to make his remarks *incognito*, but he sends two men, two young men (say the LXX) to view the land, that from their report he might take his measures in attacking Jericho. Observe, (1.) There is no remedy, but great men must see with other peoples eyes, which makes it very necessary that they be cautious in the choice of those they employ, since so much many times depends upon their fidelity. (2.) Faith in God's promise ought not to supersede but encourage our diligence in the use of proper means. Joshua is sure he has God with him, and yet sends men before him. We do not trust God, but tempt him, if our expectations slacken our endeavours. (3.) See how ready these men were to go upon this hazardous enterprize; tho' they put their lives in their hands, yet they ventured in obedience to Joshua their general, in zeal for the service of the camp, and in dependence upon the power of that God, who being the keeper of Israel in general, is the protector of every particular Israelite in the way of his duty.

2. The providence of God, directing the spies to the house of Rahab, how they got over Jordan we are not told, but into Jericho they came, which was about seven or eight miles from the river, and there seeking for a convenient inn, were directed to the house of Rahab, here called a harlot; a woman that had formerly been of ill fame, the reproach of which stuck to her name, tho' of late she had repented and reformed; Simon the leper, (Matth. xxvi. 6.) tho' cleansed from his leprosy, wore the reproach of it in his name as long as he lived; so Rahab the harlot, and she is so called in the New Testament, where both her faith and her good works are praised; to teach us, 1. That the greatness of sin is no bar to pardoning mercy, if it be truly repented of in time? We read of publicans and harlots entering into the kingdom of the Messiah, and welcome to all the privileges of that kingdom, Matth. xxi. 31. 2. That there are many, who before their conversion were very wicked and vile, and yet afterwards come to great eminency in faith and holiness. 3. Even those that through grace have repented of the sins of their youth must expect to bear the reproach of them, and when they hear of their old faults must renew their repentance; and as an evidence of that, hear of them patiently.

God's Israel, for ought appears, had but one friend, but one well-wisher in all Jericho, and that was Rahab a harlot. God has often served his own purposes, and his church's interests by men of none of the best morals. Had these scouts gone to any other house but this, they had certainly been betrayed, and put to death without mercy. But God knew where they had a friend that would be true to them, tho' they did not, and directed them thither. Thus that which seems to us most contingent and accidental, is often over-ruled by the divine providence to serve its great ends. And those that faithfully acknowledge God in their ways, he will guide them with his eye. See Jer. xxxvi. 19, 26.

3. The

3. The piety of Rahab, in receiving and protecting these Israelites. Those that keep publick houses entertain all comers, and think themselves obliged to be civil to their guests. But Rahab shewed her guests more than common civility, and went upon an uncommon principle in what she did; it was by faith that she received those with peace against whom her king and country had denounced war, *Heb. xi. 31.* (1.) She bid them welcome to her house, they lodged there, tho' it appears by what she said to them, *ver. 9.* she knew both whence they came, and what their business was. (2.) Perceiving that they were observed coming into the city, and umbrage taken from it, she hid them upon the roof of the house, which was flat, and covered them with stalks of flax, (*ver. 6.*) so that if the officers should come thither to search for them, there they might lie undiscovered. By these stalks of flax, which she herself had laid in order upon the roof to dry in the sun, in order to the beating of it, and making it ready for the wheel, it appears she had one of the good characters of the virtuous women, however in others of them she might be deficient, that she *seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands*, *Prov. xxxi. 13.* From which instance of her honest industry, one would hope, that whatever she had been formerly, she was not now a harlot. (3.) When she was examined concerning them, she denied they were in her house, turned off the officers that had a warrant to search for them with a sham, and so secured them. No marvel that the king of Jericho sent to enquire after them, *ver. 2, 3.* he had cause to fear when the enemy was at his door, and his fear made him suspicious and jealous of all strangers; he had reason to demand from Rahab that she should *bring forth the men* to be dealt with as spies: but Rahab not only disowned that she knew them, or knew where they were, but that no further search might be made for them in the city, told the pursuivants they were gone away again, and in all probability might be overtaken, *ver. 4, 5.* Now, 1. We are sure this was a good work: it is canonized by the apostle, *Jam. ii. 25.* where she is said to be *justified by works*, and this is instanced in that *she received the messengers, and sent them out another way*, and she did it by faith, such a faith as set her above the fear of man, even of the wrath of the king. She believed, upon the report she had heard of the wonders wrought for Israel, that their God was the only true God, and that therefore their declared design upon Canaan would undoubtedly take effect, and in this faith she sided with them, protected them, and courted their favour. Had she said, I believe God is yours, and Canaan yours, but I dare not shew you any kindness, her faith had been dead and unactive, and would not have justified her. But by this it appeared to be both alive and lively, that she exposed herself to the utmost peril even of life in obedience to her faith. Note, Those only are true believers that can find in their hearts to venture for God; and those that by faith take the Lord for their God take his people for their people; and cast in their lot among them. They that have God for their refuge and hiding-place, must testify their gratitude by their readiness to shelter his people when there is occasion: *let mine outcasts dwell with thee*, *Isa. xvi. 3, 4.* And we must be glad of an opportunity of testifying the sincerity and zeal of our love to God, by hazardous services to his church and kingdom among men. But, 2. There is that in it which it is not easy to justify, and yet it must be justified, or else it could not be so good a work as to justify her. (1.) It is plain she betrayed her country, by harbouring the enemies of it, and aiding those that were designing its destruction, which could not consist with her allegiance to her prince, and her affection and duty to the community she was a member of. But that which justifies her in this is, that *she knew the Lord had given Israel this land*, *ver. 9.* knew it by the incontestible miracles God had wrought for them, which confirmed that grant; and her obligations to God were higher than her obligations to any other: If she knew *God had given them this land*, it would have been a sin to join with those that hindered them of it. But since no such grant of any land to any people can now be proved, this will by no means justify any such treacherous practices against the publick welfare. (2.) It is plain she deceived the officers that examined her with an untruth, That she knew not whence the men were, that they were gone out, that she knew not whither they were gone; What shall we say to this? If she had either told the truth, or been silent, she had betrayed the spies, and that had certainly been a great sin: and it doth not appear that she had any other way of concealing them, but by this ironical direction to the officers to pursue them another way, which if they would suffer themselves to be deceived by, let them be deceived. None are bound to accuse themselves, or their friends, of that which tho' enquired after as a crime they know to be a virtue. This case was altogether extraordinary, and therefore cannot be drawn into a precedent; and that may be justified here which would be by no means lawful in a common case. Rahab knew by what was already done on the other side Jordan, that no mercy was to be shewed to the Canaanites, and from thence inferred, if mercy were not owing them, truth was not; they that might be destroyed might be deceived. Yet divines generally conceive that it was a sin and excusable, that being a Canaanite she was not better taught, the evil of lying; but God accepted her faith, and pardoned her infirmity: however it was in this case, we are sure it is our duty to speak every man the truth to his

neighbour, to dread and detest lying, and never to *do evil, that evil, that good may come of it*, *Rom. iii. 8.* But God accepts what is sincerely and honestly intended, tho' there be a mixture of frailty and folly in it, and is not extream to mark what we do amiss. Some suggest that what she said might possibly be true of some other men.

8. ¶ And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof; 9. And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. 10. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when you came out of Egypt; and what you did unto the two kings of the Amorites that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. 11. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath. 12. Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my fathers house; and give me a true token: 13. And that you will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death. 14. And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee. 15. Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town-wall, and she dwelt upon the wall. 16. And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide your selves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way. 17. And the men said unto her, We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear. 18. Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy fathers household home unto thee. 19. And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him. 20. And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear. 21. And she said, according unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window.

The matter is here settled between Rahab and the spies, what service she was now to do for them, and what favour they were afterwards to shew to her. She secures them on condition that they should secure her.

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it was the accomplishment of a promise God had made them, that he would *lay the fear and dread of them upon all this land*, Deut. xi. 25. and so it would be an earnest of the accomplishment of all the other promises God had made them. Let not the stout man glory in his courage, any more than the strong man in his strength, for God can weaken both mind and body. Let not God's Israel be afraid of their most powerful enemies, for their God can, when he pleaseth, make their most powerful enemies afraid of them. Let none think to harden their hearts against God and prosper, for he that made man's soul can at any time make the sword of his terrors approach to it. (3.) She hereupon makes profession of her faith in God and his promise; and perhaps *there was not found so great faith*, (all things considered) *no not in Israel*, as in this woman of Canaan. 1. She believes God's power and dominion over all the world, *ver. 11.* Jehovah, your God whom you worship, and call upon, is so far above all gods, that he is the only true God; for *he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath*, and is served by all the hosts of both. A vast distance there is between heaven and earth, yet both are equally under the inspection and government of the great Jehovah. Heaven is not above his power, nor earth below his cognizance. 2. She believes his promise to his people Israel, *ver. 9.* *I know that the Lord has given you the land.* The king of Jericho had heard as much as she had of the great things God had done for Israel, yet he cannot infer from thence that the Lord had given them this land, but resolves to hold it out against them to the last extremity: For the most powerful means of conviction will not of themselves attain the end without divine grace, and by that grace, Rahab the harlot, who had only heard of the wonders God had wrought, speaks with more assurance of the truth of the promise made to the fathers, than all the elders of Israel had done who were eye-witnesses of those wonders, many of whom perished through unbelief of this promise. *Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed*; so Rahab did; *O woman, great is thy faith!*

2. She engaged them to take her and her relations under their protection, that they might not perish in the destruction of Jericho, *ver. 12, 13.* Now (1.) It was an evidence of the sincerity and strength of her faith concerning the approaching revolution in her country, that she was so solicitous to make an interest for herself with the Israelites, and courted their kindness. She foresaw the conquest of her country, and in the belief of that, bespoke in time the favour of the conquerors. Thus Noah being *moved with fear prepared an ark to the saving of his house, and the condemning of the world*, Heb. xi. 7. They who truly believe the divine revelation concerning the ruin of sinners, and the grant of the heavenly land to God's Israel will give diligence to flee from the wrath to come, and to lay hold on eternal life, by joining themselves to God and to his people. (2.) The provision she made for the safety of her relations, as well as for her own, is a laudable instance of natural affection, and an intimation to us in like manner to do all we can for the salvation of the souls of those that are dear to us, and, with ourselves, to bring them, if possible, into the bond of the covenant. No mention is made of her husband and children, but only her parents and brothers and sisters, whom tho' she was herself a house-keeper she retained—a due concern for. (3.) Her request that they would swear unto her by Jehovah, is an instance of her acquaintance with the only true God, and her faith in him, and devotion towards him, one act of which is religiously to *swear by his name*. (4.) Her petition is very just and reasonable, that since she had protected them they should protect her; and since her kindness to them extended to their people, for whom they were now negotiating, their kindness to her should take in all her's. It was the least they could do for one that had saved their lives with the hazard of her own. Note, Those that shew mercy may expect to find mercy. Observe, She doth not demand any preferment by way of reward, for her kindness to them, tho' they lay so much at her mercy that she might have made her own terms, but only indents for her life, which in a general destruction would be a singular favour. Thus God promised Ebed-Melech in recompence for his kindness to Jeremiah, that in the worst of times he should have *his life for a prey*, Jer. xxxix. 18. Yet this Rahab was afterwards advanced to be a princess in Israel, the wife of Solomon, and one of the ancestors of Christ, *Mat. i. 5.* Those that faithfully serve Christ and suffer for him, he will not only protect them but prefer them, and will do for them *more than they are able to ask or think*.

3. They solemnly engaged for her preservation in the common destruction, *ver. 14.* *Our life for your's.* We will take as much care of your lives as of our own, and would as soon hurt ourselves as any of you: Nay, they imprecate God's judgments on themselves, if they should violate their promise to her. She had pawned her life for theirs, and now they in requital pawn their lives for her's, and (as publick persons) with them they pawn the publick faith, and the credit of their nation, for they plainly interest all Israel in the engagement in those words, *When the Lord has given us the land*, meaning not themselves only, but the people whose agents they were. No doubt, they knew themselves sufficiently authorized, to treat with Rahab concerning this matter, and were confident that Joshua would ratify what they did, else they had not dealt honestly; the general law that they should make no

covenant with the Canaanites, (*Deut. vii. 2.*) did not forbid them to take under their protection a particular person, that was heartily come into their interests, and had done them real kindnesses: The law of gratitude is one of the laws of nature. Now observe here,

(1.) The promises they made her. In general, *We will deal kindly and truly with thee*, *ver. 14.* We will not only be kind in promising now, but true in performing what we promise; and not only true in performing just what we promise, but kind in out-doing thy demands and expectations. The goodness of God is often expressed by his kindness and truth, (*Psal. cxvii. 2.*) and in both these we must be followers of him. In particular, if a *hand be upon any in the house with thee*, his *blood shall be on our head*, *ver. 19.* If hurt come through our carelessness to those whom we are obliged to protect, we thereby contract guilt, and blood will be found a heavy load.

(2.) The provisos and limitations of their promises. Tho' they were in haste, and it may be in some confusion, yet we find them very cautious in settling this agreement, and the terms of it, not to bind themselves to more than was fit for them to perform. Note, Covenants must be made with care; and we must swear in judgment, lest we find ourselves perplexed and entangled when it is too late *after vows to make enquiry*. They that will be conscientious in keeping their promises, will be cautious in making them, and perhaps may insert conditions which others may think frivolous.

Three provisos their promise is here clogged with, and they were necessary ones. They will protect Rahab, and all her relations always, provided (1.) That she tie the scarlet cord, with which she was now about to let them down, in the window of her house, *ver. 18.* This was to be a mark upon the house, which the spies would take care to give notice of to the camp of Israel, that no soldier, how hot and eager soever he was in military executions, might offer any violence to the house that was thus distinguished. This was like the blood sprinkled upon the door-post which secured the first-born from the destroying angel, and being of the same colour, some allude to this also, to represent the safety of believers, under the protection of the blood of Christ, sprinkled on the conscience. The same cord that she made use of for the preservation of these Israelites, was to be made use of for her preservation. What we serve and honour God with, we may expect he will bless and make comfortable to us. (2.) That she should have all those whose safety she had desired, in the house with her, and keep them there; and that at the time of taking the town, none of them should dare to stir out of doors, *ver. 18, 19.* This was a necessary proviso, for Rahab's kindred could not be distinguished any other way than by being in her distinguished house; should they mingle themselves with their neighbours, there was no remedy but the sword would devour *one as well as another*. It was a reasonable proviso, that since they were saved purely for Rahab's sake, her house should have the honour of being their castle; and that if they would not *perish with them that believed not*, they should thus far believe the certainty and severity of the ruin coming upon their city, as to retire into a place *made safe by promise*, as Noah into the ark, and Lot into Zoar, and should *save themselves from this untoward generation*, by separating from them. It was likewise a significant proviso, intimating to us that those who are added to the church that they may be saved, must keep close to the society of the faithful, and having *escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust*, must take heed of being again entangled therein. (3.) That she should keep counsel, *ver. 14, 20.* *if thou utter this our business*, i. e. if thou betray us when we are gone, or if thou make this agreement publick, so as that others tie scarlet lines in their windows, and so confound us; then we will be quit of thine oath. They are unworthy of *the secret of the Lord*, that know not how to keep it to themselves when there is occasion.

4. She then took effectual care to secure her new friends, and *sent them out another way*, *Jam. ii. 25.* Having fully understood the bargain they made with her, and consented to it, *ver. 21.* she then *let them down by a cord* over the city wall, *ver. 15.* the situation of her house befriending them herein: Thus Paul made his escape out of Damascus, *2 Cor. xi. 33.* She also directed them which way to go for their own safety, being better acquainted with the country than they were, *ver. 16.* She directs them to leave the high road, and abscond in the mountains till the pursuers were returned, for till then they could not safely venture over Jordan. Those that are in the way of God and their duty may expect that providence will protect them, but that will not excuse them from taking all prudent methods for their own safety. God will keep us, but then we must not wilfully expose ourselves. Providence must be trusted, but not tempted. Calvin thinks that their charge to Rahab to keep this matter secret, and not to utter it, was intended for her safety, lest the boasting of her security from the sword of Israel, should, before they came to protect her, fall into the hands of the king of Jericho, and be put to death for treason: thus do they prudently advise her for her safety, as she advised them for theirs. And it is good advice, which we should at any time be thankful for, to *take heed to ourselves*.

3. The piety of Rahab, in receiving and protecting these Israelites. Those that keep publick houses entertain all comers, and think themselves obliged to be civil to their guests. But Rahab shewed her guests more than common civility, and went upon an uncommon principle in what she did; it was by faith that she received those with peace against whom her king and country had denounced war, *Heb. xi. 31.* (1.) She bid them welcome to her house, they lodged there, tho' it appears by what she said to them, *ver. 9.* she knew both whence they came, and what their business was. (2.) Perceiving that they were observed coming into the city, and umbrage taken from it, she hid them upon the roof of the house, which was flat, and covered them with stalks of flax, (*ver. 6.*) so that if the officers should come thither to search for them, there they might lie undiscovered. By these stalks of flax, which she herself had laid in order upon the roof to dry in the sun, in order to the beating of it, and making it ready for the wheel, it appears she had one of the good characters of the virtuous women, however in others of them she might be deficient, that she *seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands*, *Prov. xxxi. 13.* From which instance of her honest industry, one would hope, that whatever she had been formerly, she was not now a harlot. (3.) When she was examined concerning them, she denied they were in her house, turned off the officers that had a warrant to search for them with a sham, and so secured them. No marvel that the king of Jericho sent to enquire after them, *ver. 2, 3.* he had cause to fear when the enemy was at his door, and his fear made him suspicious and jealous of all strangers; he had reason to demand from Rahab that she should bring forth the men to be dealt with as spies: but Rahab not only disowned that she knew them, or knew where they were, but that no further search might be made for them in the city, told the pursuivants they were gone away again, and in all probability might be overtaken, *ver. 4, 5.* Now, 1. We are sure this was a good work: it is canonized by the apostle, *Jam. ii. 25.* where she is said to be justified by works, and this is instanced in that she received the messengers, and sent them out another way, and she did it by faith, such a faith as set her above the fear of man, even of the wrath of the king. She believed, upon the report she had heard of the wonders wrought for Israel, that their God was the only true God, and that therefore their declared design upon Canaan would undoubtedly take effect, and in this faith she sided with them, protected them, and courted their favour. Had she said, I believe God is yours, and Canaan yours, but I dare not shew you any kindness, her faith had been dead and unactive, and would not have justified her. But by this it appeared to be both alive and lively, that she exposed herself to the utmost peril even of life in obedience to her faith. Note, Those only are true believers that can find in their hearts to venture for God; and those that by faith take the Lord for their God take his people for their people; and cast in their lot among them. They that have God for their refuge and hiding-place, must testify their gratitude by their readiness to shelter his people when there is occasion: *let mine outcasts dwell with thee*, *Isa. xvi. 3, 4.* And we must be glad of an opportunity of testifying the sincerity and zeal of our love to God, by hazardous services to his church and kingdom among men. But, 2. There is that in it which it is not easy to justify, and yet it must be justified, or else it could not be so good a work as to justify her. (1.) It is plain she betrayed her country, by harbouring the enemies of it, and aiding those that were designing its destruction, which could not consist with her allegiance to her prince, and her affection and duty to the community she was a member of. But that which justifies her in this is, that she knew the Lord had given Israel this land, *ver. 9.* knew it by the incontestible miracles God had wrought for them, which confirmed that grant; and her obligations to God were higher than her obligations to any other: If she knew God had given them this land, it would have been a sin to join with those that hindered them of it. But since no such grant of any land to any people can now be proved, this will by no means justify any such treacherous practices against the publick welfare. (2.) It is plain she deceived the officers that examined her with an untruth, That she knew not whence the men were, that they were gone out, that she knew not whither they were gone; What shall we say to this? If she had either told the truth, or been silent, she had betrayed the spies, and that had certainly been a great sin: and it doth not appear that she had any other way of concealing them, but by this ironical direction to the officers to pursue them another way, which if they would suffer themselves to be deceived by, let them be deceived. None are bound to accuse themselves, or their friends, of that which tho' enquired after as a crime they know to be a virtue. This case was altogether extraordinary, and therefore cannot be drawn into a precedent; and that may be justified here which would be by no means lawful in a common case. Rahab knew by what was already done on the other side Jordan, that no mercy was to be shewed to the Canaanites, and from thence inferred, if mercy were not owing them, truth was not; they that might be destroyed might be deceived. Yet divines generally conceive that it was a sin and excusable, that being a Canaanite she was not better taught, the evil of lying; but God accepted her faith, and pardoned her infirmity: however it was in this case, we are sure it is our duty to speak every man the truth to his

neighbour, to dread and detest lying, and never to do evil, that evil, that good may come of it, *Rom. iii. 8.* But God accepts what is sincerely and honestly intended, tho' there be a mixture of frailty and folly in it, and is not extream to mark what we do amiss. Some suggest that what she said might possibly be true of some other men.

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(1.) The promises they made her. In general, *We will deal kindly and truly with thee*, ver. 14. We will not only be kind in promising now, but true in performing what we promise; and not only true in performing just what we promise, but kind in out-doing thy demands and expectations. The goodness of God is often expressed by his kindness and truth, (*Psal.* cxvii. 2.) and in both these we must be followers of him. In particular, if a *hand be upon any in the house with thee*, his *blood shall be on our head*, ver. 19. If hurt come through our carelessness to those whom we are obliged to protect, we thereby contract guilt, and blood will be found a heavy load.

(2.) The provisos and limitations of their promises. Tho' they were in haste, and it may be in some confusion, yet we find them very cautious in settling this agreement, and the terms of it, not to bind themselves to more than was fit for them to perform. Note, Covenants must be made with care; and we must swear in judgment, lest we find ourselves perplexed and entangled when it is too late *after vows to make enquiry*. They that will be conscientious in keeping their promises, will be cautious in making them, and perhaps may insert conditions which others may think frivolous.

Three provisos their promise is here clogged with, and they were necessary ones. They will protect Rahab, and all her relations always, provided (1.) That she tie the scarlet cord, with which she was now about to let them down, in the window of her house, *ver.* 18. This was to be a mark upon the house, which the spies would take care to give notice of to the camp of Israel, that no soldier, how hot and eager soever he was in military executions, might offer any violence to the house that was thus distinguished. This was like the blood sprinkled upon the door-post which secured the first-born from the destroying angel, and being of the same colour, some allude to this also, to represent the safety of believers, under the protection of the blood of Christ, sprinkled on the conscience. The same cord that she made use of for the preservation of these Israelites, was to be made use of for her preservation. What we serve and honour God with, we may expect he will bless and make comfortable to us. (2.) That she should have all those whose safety she had desired, in the house with her, and keep them there; and that at the time of taking the town, none of them should dare to stir out of doors, *ver.* 18, 19. This was a necessary proviso, for Rahab's kindred could not be distinguished any other way than by being in her distinguished house; should they mingle themselves with their neighbours, there was no remedy but the sword would devour *one as well as another*. It was a reasonable proviso, that since they were saved purely for Rahab's sake, her house should have the honour of being their castle; and that if they would not *perish with them that believed not*, they should thus far believe the certainty and severity of the ruin coming upon their city, as to retire into a place *made safe by promise*, as Noah into the ark, and Lot into Zoar, and should *save themselves from this untoward generation*, by separating from them. It was likewise a significant proviso, intimating to us that those who are added to the church that they may be saved, must keep close to the society of the faithful, and having *escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust*, must take heed of being again entangled therein. (3.) That she should keep counsel, *ver.* 14, 20. *if thou utter this our business*, i. e. if thou betray us when we are gone, or if thou make this agreement publick, so as that others tie scarlet lines in their windows, and so confound us; then we will be quit of thine oath. They are unworthy of *the secret of the Lord*, that know not how to keep it to themselves when there is occasion.

4. She then took effectual care to secure her new friends, and *sent them out another way*, Jam. ii. 25. Having fully understood the bargain they made with her, and consented to it, *ver.* 21. she then *let them down by a cord* over the city wall, *ver.* 15. the situation of her house befriending them herein : Thus Paul made his escape out of Damascus, 2 *Cor.* xi. 33. She also directed them which way to go for their own safety, being better acquainted with the country than they were, *ver.* 16. She directs them to leave the high road, and abscond in the mountains till the pursuers were returned, for till then they could not safely venture over Jordan. Those that are in the way of God and their duty may expect that providence will protect them, but that will not excuse them from taking all prudent methods for their own safety. God will keep us, but then we must not wilfully expose ourselves. Providence must be trusted, but not tempted. Calvin thinks that their charge to Rahab to keep this matter secret, and not to utter it, was intended for her safety, lest she boasting of her security from the sword of Israel, should, before they came to protect her, fall into the hands of the king of Jericho, and be put to death for treason : thus do they prudently advise her for her safety, as she advised them for theirs. And it is good advice, which we should at any time be thankful for, to *take heed to ourselves*.

22. And they went and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned. And the pursuers sought *them* throughout all the way, but found *them* not. 23 ¶ So the two men returned, and descended from the mountain, and passed over, and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all *things* that befel them. 24. And they said unto Joshua, Truly the LORD hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us.

We have here the safe return of the spies Joshua had sent, and the great encouragement they brought with them to Israel to proceed in their descent upon Canaan. Had they been minded to discourage the people, as the evil spies did that Moses sent, they might have told them what they had observed of the height and strength of the walls of Jericho, and the extraordinary vigilance of the king of Jericho, and how narrowly they escaped out of his hands; but they were of another spirit, and depending themselves upon the divine promise, they animated Joshua likewise.

1. Their return in safety was itself an encouragement to Joshua, and a token for good. That God provided for them so good a friend as Rahab was, in an enemy's country, and that, notwithstanding the rage of the king of Jericho, and the eagerness of the pursuers, they were come back in peace, was such an instance of God's great care concerning them for Israel's sake, as might assure the people of the divine conduct and care they were under, which would undoubtedly make the progress of their arms glorious. He that so wonderfully protected their scouts, would preserve their men of war, and cover their heads in the day of battle.

2. The report they brought was much more encouraging, *ver. 24. all the inhabitants of the country, tho' resolved to stand it out, yet do faint because of us*, they have neither wisdom to yield, nor courage to fight; whence they conclude, *Truly the Lord has delivered into our hands all the land*, it is all our own, we have nothing to do, in effect, but to take possession. Sinners' frights are sometimes sure presages of their fall. If we resist our spiritual enemies, they will flee before us, which will encourage us to hope that in due time we shall be more than conquerors.

C H A P. III.

This chapter, and that which follows it, give us the history of Israel's passing through Jordan into Canaan, and a very memorable history it is: Long after they are bid to remember, what God did for them between Shittim (whence they decamped, ver. 1.) and Gilgal, where they next pitched, chap. iv. 19. Mic. vi. 5. That they might know the righteousness of the Lord. By Joshua's order they marched up to the river's side, ver. 1. and then almighty power led them through it. They passed through the Red-sea unexpectedly, and in their flight by night, but they have notice some time before of their passing through Jordan, and their expectations raised. (1.) The people are directed to follow the ark, ver. 2—4. (2.) They are commanded to sanctify themselves, ver. 5. (3.) The priests with the ark are ordered to lead the van, ver. 6. (4.) Joshua is magnified and made commander in chief, ver. 7, 8. (5.) Public notice is given of what God is about to do for them, ver. 9—13. (6.) The thing is done, Jordan is divided, and Israel brought safely through it, ver. 14—17. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.

1. **A**ND Joshua rose early in the morning, and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over. 2. And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host; 3. And they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place and go after it. 4. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed *this way* heretofore. 5. And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for to-morrow the LORD will do wonders among you. 6. And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people.

Rahab, in mentioning to the spies the *drying up of the Red-sea*, chap. ii. 10. as that which terrified the Canaanites more than any thing else, intimates that they on that side the water

expected that Jordan, that great defence of their country, would in like manner give way to them; whether the Israelites had any expectation of it doth not appear. God often *did things for them which they looked not for*, Isa. lxiv. 3. Now here we are told,

1. That they *came to Jordan, and lodged there*, ver. 1. Tho' they were not yet told how they should pass the river, and were unprovided for the passing of it in any ordinary way, yet they went forward in faith, having been told, *chap. i. 11. that they should pass it*. We must go on in the way of our duty, tho' we foresee difficulties, trusting God to help us through them when we come to them. Let us proceed as far as we can, and depend on divine sufficiency for that which we find ourselves not sufficient for. In this march Joshua led them, and particular notice is taken of his early rising; as there is afterwards upon other occasions, *chap. vi. 12.—vii. 16.—viii. 10.* which intimates how little he loved his ease, how much he loved his business, and what care and pains he was willing to take in it. Those that would bring great things to pass must rise early. *Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty*. Joshua herein set a good example to the officers under him, and taught them to rise early, and to all that are in publick stations especially to attend continually to the duty of their place.

2. That the people were directed to follow the ark; officers were appointed to go through the host to give these directions, *ver. 2. that every Israelite might know both what to do, and what to depend upon*. 1. They might depend upon the ark to lead them; *i. e.* upon God himself, of whose presence the ark was an instituted sign and token. It seems the pillar of cloud and fire was removed, else that had led them, unless we suppose that that now hovered over the ark, and so they had a double guide, honour was put upon the ark, and a defence upon that glory. It is called here the *ark of the covenant of the Lord their God*. What greater encouragement could they have than this, That the Lord was their God, a God in covenant with them, for here was the *ark of his covenant*; if God be ours, we need not to fear any evil. And that he was nigh to them, present with them, went before them, What could come amiss to them that were thus guided, thus guarded? Formerly the ark was carried in the midst of the camp, but now it went before them to *search out a resting place* for them, *Numb. x. 33.* and, as it were, to give them livery and seisin of the promised land, and put them in possession of it. In the ark the tables of the law were, and over it the mercy-seat, for the divine law and grace reigning in the heart are the surest pledges of God's presence and favour; and those that would be led to the heavenly Canaan, must take the law of God for their guide (*If thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments*) and have the great propitiation in their eye, *looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life*. 2. They might depend upon the priests and Levites, who were appointed for that purpose to carry the ark before them. The work of ministers is to hold forth the word of life, and to take care of the administration of those ordinances, which are the tokens of God's presence, and the instruments of his power and grace; and herein they must go before the people of God, in the way to heaven. 3. The people must follow the ark. *Remove from your place and go after it*; (1.) As those that are resolved never to forsake it; wherever God's ordinances are, there we must be; if they sit, we must remove and go after them. (2.) As those that are intirely satisfied in its conduct, that it will lead in the best way to the best end; and therefore, *Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest*. This must be all their care, to attend the motions of the ark, and follow it with an implicit faith. Thus must we walk after the rule of the word, and the direction of the Spirit in every thing, so shall *peace be upon us*, as it now was upon the Israel of God. They must follow the priests as far as they carried the ark, but no further, so we must follow our ministers only as they follow Christ. 4. In following the ark, they must *keep their distance*, ver. 4. They must none of them come within a thousand yards of the ark: 1. They must thus express their awful and reverent regard to that token of God's presence, lest its familiarity with them should breed contempt. This charge to them, not to come near, was agreeable to that dispensation of darkness, bondage, and terror; but we now through Christ have access with boldness. 2. Thus it was made to appear, that the ark was able to protect itself, and needed not to be guarded by the men of war, but was itself a guard to them. With what a noble defiance of the enemy did it leave all its friends half a mile behind, but the unarmed priests that carried it, as perfectly sufficient for its own safety, and theirs that followed it. 3. Thus it was the better seen by those that were to be led by it, *that ye may know the way by which ye must go*, seeing it, as it were, chalked out, or tracked by the ark. Had they been allowed to come near it, they would have surrounded it, and none would have had the sight of it, but those that were close to it, but being put at such a distance before them, they would all have the satisfaction of seeing it, and would be animated by the sight. And it was with good reason that this provision was made for their encouragement, *for ye have not passed this way heretofore*. This had been the character of all their way through the wilderness, it was an untrodden path, but this especially through Jordan. While we are here, we must expect and prepare for unusual events, to pass ways that

we have not passed before: and much more when we go hence, our way through the *valley of the shadow of death*, is a way we have not gone before, which makes it the more formidable. But if we have the assurance of God's presence, we need not fear, that will furnish us with such strength as we never had, when we come to do a work we never did.

3. They were commanded to sanctify themselves, prepare to attend the ark, and good reason, for *to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you*, ver. 5. See how magnificently he speaks of God's works, he *doth wonders*, and is therefore to be adored, admired, and trusted in. See how intimately acquainted Joshua was with the divine counsels, he could tell before-hand what God would do, and when. See what preparation we must make to receive the discoveries of God's glory, and the communications of his grace, we must sanctify our selves. This we must do when we are to attend the ark, and God by it is about to do wonders among us; we must separate our selves from all other cares, devote our selves to God's honour, and *cleanse our selves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit*. The people of Israel were now entering into the holy land, and therefore must sanctify themselves. God was about to give them uncommon instances of his favour, which by meditation and prayer they must compose their minds to a very careful observation of, that they might give God the glory, and take to themselves the comfort of these appearances.

4. The priests were ordered to take up the ark, and carry it before the people, ver. 6. It was the Levites work, ordinarily to carry the ark, *Numb. iv. 15*. But on this great occasion the priests were ordered to do it. And they did as they were commanded, *took up the ark*, and did not think themselves disparaged, *went before the people*, and did not think themselves exposed; the ark they carried was both their honour and their defence. And now we may suppose, that prayer of Moses, used when the ark set forward, *Numb. x. 35*. *Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered*. Magistrates are here instructed to stir up ministers to their work, and to make use of their authority for the furtherance of religion; ministers must likewise learn to go before in the way of God, and not to shrink or draw back when dangers are before them. They must expect to be most struck at, but they *know whom they have trusted*.

7 ¶ And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. 8. And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan. 9. ¶ And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of the LORD your God. 10. And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites. 11. Behold, the ark of the covenant of the LORD of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan. 12. Now, therefore take ye twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man. 13. And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests, that bear the ark of the LORD, the LORD of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above: and they shall stand upon an heap.

We may observe here how God honours Joshua, and, by this wondrous work he is about to do, designs to make Israel know, that he is their governor. And then how Joshua honours God, and endeavours by it to make Israel know that he is their God. Thus those that honour God, he will honour, and those whom he has advanced, should do what they can in their places to exalt him.

1. God speaks to Joshua, to put honour upon him, ver. 7, 8.

(1.) It was a great honour God did him, that he spake to him, as he had done to Moses, from off the mercy-seat, before the priests removed it with the ark. This would make Joshua easy in himself, and great among the people, that God was pleased to speak so familiarly to him.

2. That he designed to magnify him in the sight of all Israel. He had told him before he would be with him, chap. i. 5. that comforted him, but now all Israel shall see it, and that magnified him. Those are truly great with whom God is, and whom he employs, and owns in his service. God magnified him, because he would have the people magnify him. Pious magistrates are to be highly honoured and esteemed as publick blessings, and the more we see of God with them, the more we should honour them. By the dividing of the Red-sea, Israel was convinced that God was with Moses in bringing them out of Egypt; therefore they are said to be baptized unto Moses in the sea, 1 Cor. x. 2. And

upon that occasion they believed him, *Exod. xiv. 31*: And now by the dividing of Jordan, they shall be convinced, that God is in like manner with Joshua, in bringing them into Canaan. God had magnified Joshua before on several occasions, but now he began to magnify him as the successor of Moses in the government. Some have observed, it was at the banks of Jordan that God began to magnify Joshua, and at the same place he began to magnify our Lord Jesus as Mediator; for John was baptizing at Bethabara, the *house of passage*, and there it was, that when our Saviour was baptized, it was proclaimed concerning him, *This is my beloved Son*.

(3.) That by him he gave orders to the priests themselves, tho' they were his immediate attendants, ver. 8. *Thou shalt command the priests*, i. e. thou shalt make known to them the divine command in this matter, and take care that they observe it; to stand still at the brink of Jordan while the waters part, that it may appear to be *at the presence of the Lord*, of the mighty God of Jacob, that Jordan is *driven back*, *Psal. cxiv. 5, 7*. God could have divided the river without the priests, but they could not without him. The priests must herein set a good example to the people, and teach them to do their utmost in the service of God, and trust him for help in time of need.

2. Joshua speaks to the people, and therein honours God.

1. He demands attention, ver. 9. *Come hither to me*, as many as can come within hearing, and before you see the works, *hear the words of the Lord your God*, that you may compare them together, and they may illustrate each other. He had commanded them to sanctify themselves, and therefore calls them to *hear the word of God*, for that is the ordinary means of sanctification, *Job. xvii. 17*.

2. He now tells them at length, by what way they should pass over Jordan, by the stopping of its stream, ver. 13. *The waters of Jordan shall be cut off*. God could by a sudden and miraculous frost have congealed the surface, so that they might all have gone over upon the ice; but that being a thing sometimes done, even in that country, by the ordinary power of nature, *Job xxxviii. 30*. It would not have been such an honour to Israel's God, nor such a terror to Israel's enemies; it must therefore be done in such a way as had no precedent, but the dividing of the Red-sea: and that miracle is here repeated, to shew that God has the same power to finish the salvation of his people, that he had to begin it, for he is the *alpha* and the *omega*; and that the word of the Lord (as the Chaldee reads it, ver. 7.) the essential, eternal word was as truly with Joshua, as he was with Moses. And by the dividing of the waters from the waters, and the making of the dry land to appear which had been covered, God would mind them of that, which Moses by revelation had instructed them in, concerning the work of creation, *Gen. i. 6, 9*. That by what they now saw, their belief of that which they there read might be assisted, and they might know that the God whom they worshipped, was the same God that made the world, and it was the same power that was engaged and employed for them.

3. The people having been directed before to follow the ark, are here told that it should pass before them into Jordan, ver. 11. Observe, (1.) The ark of the covenant must be their guide. During the reign of Moses, the cloud was their guide, but now, in Joshua's reign, the ark, both visible signs of God's presence and presidency, but divine grace under the Mosaic dispensation, was wrapt up as in a cloud, and covered with a veil, but by Christ, our Joshua, it is revealed in the ark of the covenant unveiled. (2.) It is called *the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth*. He that is your God, ver. 9. in covenant with you, is the *Lord of all the earth*, has both right and power to command, control, use and dispose of all nations; of all creatures. He is the *Lord of all the earth*, therefore he needs not you, nor can he be benefited by you; therefore it is your honour and happiness to have him in covenant with you; if he be yours, all the creatures are at your service, and when he pleaseth, shall be employed for you. When we are praising and worshipping God as Israel's God, and ours through Christ, we must remember that he is the *Lord of the whole earth*, and reverence him; and trust in him accordingly. Some observe an accent in the original, which they think directs us to translate it somewhat more emphatically, *Behold the ark of the covenant, even the ark of the Lord, or even of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth*. (3.) They are told, that the ark should pass before them into Jordan; God would not appoint them to go any where, but where he himself would go before them, and go with them; and they might safely venture, even into Jordan itself, if the ark of the covenant lead them. While we make God's precept our rule, his promises our stay, and his providence our guide; we need not dread the greatest difficulties we may meet with in the way of duty. That promise is sure to all the seed, *Isa. xliii. 2*. *When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee*.

4. From what God was now about to do for them, he infers an assurance of what he would yet further do. This he mentions first, so much was his heart upon it, and to great a satisfaction did it give him, ver. 10. *Hereby ye shall know that the living God*, (the true God, and God of power, not one of the dead gods of the heathen) *is among you*, tho' you see him not, nor are to have any image of him; is among you to give you law, secure your welfare,

welfare, and receive your homage; is among you in this great undertaking now before you; and therefore you shall, nay, he himself, *will, without fail, drive out from before you the Canaanites.* So that the dividing of Jordan was intended to be to them, (1.) A sure token of God's presence with them; by this they could not but *know that God was among them*, unless their unbelief was as obstinate against the most convincing evidence, as that of their fathers was, who presently, after God had divided the Red-sea before them, impudently asked, *Is the Lord among us, or is he not?* Exod. xvii. 7. (2.) A sure pledge of the conquest of Canaan; if the living God is among you, *expelling he will expel*, (so the Hebrew phrase is) *from before you the Canaanites.* He will do it certainly, and do it effectually, what should hinder him? What can stand in his way, before whom rivers are divided, and dried up? The forcing of the lines was a certain preface of the ruin of all their hosts: how could they stand their ground. When Jordan itself was driven back? When they had not courage to dispute this pass, but trembled at the approach of the *mighty God of Jacob*, Psal. cxiv. 7. What opposition could they ever make after this? This assurance which Joshua here gives them, was so well grounded, as that it would enable one Israelite to chase a thousand Canaanites, and two to put ten thousand to flight: and it would be abundantly strengthened by remembering the song of Moses, dictated forty years before, which plainly foretold the dividing of Jordan, and the influence that would have upon the driving out of the Canaanites, Exod. xv. 15, 16, 17. *The inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away*, and so be effectually driven out, they shall be as still as a stone till thy people pass over, and then thou shalt bring them in and plant them. Note, God's glorious appearances for his church and people, ought to be improved by us for the encouragement of our faith and hope for the future. *As for God, his work is perfect.* If Jordan's flood cannot keep them out, Canaan's force cannot turn them out again.

5. He directs them to get twelve men ready, one of each tribe, who must be within call, to receive such orders as Joshua should afterwards give them, ver. 12. It doth not appear that they were to attend the priests, and walk with them when they carried the ark, that they might more immediately be witnesses of the wonders done by it, as some think; but they were to be at hand for the service they were called to, chap. iv. 4.

14. ¶ And it came to pass when the people removed from their tents to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people; 15. And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest) 16. That the waters which came down from above, stood and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho. 17. And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.

Here we have a short, and plain account of the dividing of the river Jordan, and the passage of the children of Israel through it. The story is not garnished with the flowers of rhetoric, gold needs not to be painted; but it tells us, in short, matter of fact.

1. That this river was now broader and deeper than usually it was at other times of the year, ver. 15. The melting of the snow on the mountains of Lebanon, near which this river had its rise, was the occasion, that, at the time of harvest, barley harvest, which was in the spring of the year, Jordan overflowed all his banks. This great frost, just at that time, (which providence might have restrained for once, or have ordered their going over at another time of the year) very much magnified the power of God, and his kindness to Israel. Note, Tho' the opposition given to the salvation of God's people, have all imaginable advantages, yet God can and will conquer it. Let the banks of Jordan be filled to the brink, filled till they run over, it is as easy to omnipotence to divide them, and dry them up, as if they were never so narrow, never so shallow, it is all one with the Lord.

2. That as soon as ever the feet of the priests dipped in the brim of the water, the stream stopped immediately, as if a sluice had been let down to dam it up, ver. 15, 16. So that the waters above swelled, stood on a heap, and run back, and yet, as it should seem, did not spread, but congealed, which unaccountable rising of the river, was observed with amazement by those that lived upwards upon it many miles off, and the remembrance of it remained among them long after; the waters on the other side this invisible dam run down of course, and left the bottom of the river dry as far downwards, it is likely, as they swelled upwards. When they passed through the Red-sea, the waters were a wall on either hand, here only on the right-hand. Note, The God

of nature, can, when he pleaseth, change the course of nature, and alter its properties, can turn fluids into solids, *waters into standing rocks*, as, on the contrary, *rocks into standing waters*, to serve his own purposes. See Psal. cxiv. 5, 8. What cannot God do? What will he not do for the perfecting of his peoples salvation? Sometimes he *cleaves the earth with rivers*, Hab. iii. 9. and sometimes, as here, *cleaves the rivers without earth*. It is easy to imagine how, when the course of this strong and rapid stream was arrested on a sudden, *the waters roared and were troubled*, so that the mountains seemed to *shake with the swelling thereof*, Psal. xlvii. 3. *how the floods lifted up their voice, the floods lifted up their waves*, while the Lord on high shewed himself *mightier than the noise of these many waters*, Psal. xciii. 3, 4. With reference to this, the prophet asks, *Was the Lord displeased against the rivers, was thine anger against the rivers?* Hab. iii. 8. *Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people*, ver. 13. In allusion to this, it is foretold among the great things God will do for the gospel-church in the latter days, that the great river Euphrates shall be dried up, that *the way of the kings of the east may be prepared*, Rev. xvi. 12. When the time is come for Israel's entrance into the land of promise, all difficulties shall be conquered, *Mountains shall become plain*, Zech. iv. 7. and rivers become dry, for the *ransomed of the Lord to pass over*. When we have finished our pilgrimage through this wilderness, death will be like this Jordan between us and the heavenly Canaan, but the ark of the covenant has prepared us a way through it, it is the last enemy that shall be destroyed.

3. That the people passed over right against Jericho, which was, (1.) An instance of their boldness, and a noble defiance of their enemies, Jericho was one of the strongest cities, and yet they dare face it at their first entrance. (2.) It was an encouragement to them to venture through Jordan, for Jericho was a goodly city, and the country about it extremely pleasant, having that in view as their own, what difficulties could discourage them from taking possession? (3.) It would increase the confusion and terror of their enemies, who, no doubt, strictly observed their motions, and were the amazed spectators of this work of wonders.

4. That the priests stood still in the midst of Jordan while all the people passed over, ver. 17. There the ark was appointed to be, to shew that the same power that parted the waters, kept them parted as long as there was occasion, and had not the divine presence, of which the ark was a token, been their security, the waters had returned upon them and buried them. There the priests were appointed to stand still, (1.) To try their faith, whether they could venture to take their post when God assigned it them, with mountains of water over their heads: as they made a bold step when they set the first foot into Jordan, so now they made a bold stand when they tarried longest in Jordan; but they knew they carried their own protection with them. Note, Ministers in times of peril should be examples of courage, and confidence in the divine goodness. (2.) It was to encourage the faith of the people, that they might go triumphantly into Canaan, and *fear no evil*, no not in this valley of the shadow of death, (for so the divided river was) being assured of God's presence which interposed between them and the greatest danger, between them and the proud waters, which otherwise had gone over their souls. Thus in the greatest dangers the saints are comforted with his rod and his staff, Psal. xxiii. 4.

C H A P. IV.

This chapter gives a further account of the miraculous passage of Israel through Jordan; 1. The provision that was made at that time to preserve the memorial of it, by twelve stones set up in Jordan, ver. 9. and other twelve stones taken up out of Jordan, ver. 1—8. 2. The march of the people through Jordan's channel, the two tribes first, then all the people, and the priests that bare the ark last, ver. 10—14. 3. The closing of the waters again upon their coming up with the ark, ver. 15—19. 4. The erecting of the monument in Gilgal, to preserve the remembrance of this work of wonder to posterity, ver. 20—24.

1. **A**ND it came to pass when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying, 2. Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man, 3. And command you them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging-place where you shall lodge this night. 4. Then Joshua called the twelve men, whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man. 5. And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of Jordan, and take ye up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel: 6. That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask